

ELLORA'S CAVE TWILIGHT



Be My

Werecoat

*Darklander
Lovers*

Tonight

RENEE FIELD

Be My Werecat Tonight

Renee Field

Book two in the Darklander Lovers series

As a surgeon, Hank is used to working with his hands. Good thing, because those skillful fingers are needed to release the passionate wildcats lying dormant in one tigress of a redheaded woman.

Naughty nurse Nora's passionate response to her blind date unleashes something untamed within her. The only problem is she doesn't appreciate her newfound gift. It's up to Hank to teach her how to embrace her wilder side or they'll both end up as housecats—a curse worse than death for a proud Darklander werecat.

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Be My Werecat Tonight

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BE MY WERECAT TONIGHT

Renee Field

Dedication

This series is dedicated to all the wild women out there looking for a night of fun.
Enjoy!

Acknowledgements

To my wonderful editor, Jaynie Ritchie.

To the man I love more each day—love you always, Brian. To my wonderful friends and writers, Lilly Cain and Cathryn Fox, for reading and then re-reading this series and for encouraging me to keep on writing.

Author Note

I've never been on a blind date but if I had, I would want one of these men.
Everything in this series is fictional.

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Chapter One

Nora Foster's body hummed in eager anticipation of her blind date. Armed with the note telling her where to meet the man she had bid on for the night, she was glad she had allowed her friends to talk her into participating in the theater's charity auction. She loved the idea of all the proceeds going toward the construction of a new theater playhouse next door to the old cinema she had frequented as a child. So what if her friend Tina was the one forking out a thousand *smackeroos* to get her a date. It was all for a good cause, or so she told herself.

Nora had a slight buzz from the three drinks she had consumed and was glad she didn't need to drive her car to meet her date for the evening. Walking confidently, she enjoyed the warm breeze of the night. The darkness didn't spook her. Just the opposite. Night had always been her favorite time and she always felt invigorated when the moon came out.

"Help me!" shouted a terrified voice from a darkened alley, jarring her happy thoughts.

Great, just my luck. I'm a witness to a mugging. Nora knew she shouldn't enter the alley but she couldn't ignore the man's plea. Still, she wasn't stupid. She latched onto the mace in her purse and edged cautiously forward into the gray, smelly alley. The rank odor of urine and rotting garbage assaulted her senses. Before she could move two feet a large blur of fur leaped past her, freezing her limbs.

What the hell was that? Nora managed about four more steps and then froze. A real live growling beast of a cat with tiger-striped fur in the front and a sleek mountain lion look from his midsection to his hind legs stood over its prey—the mugger. The cat wasn't doing anything to the man lying prone underneath him but he looked as if he wanted to. Nora froze when the cat swiveled its massive head, assessing her. Green

knowing eyes, feral with warmth, seared her. She felt her heartbeat speed up and sweat trickle down her back. Slipping off her black high heels, Nora took a cautious step forward, gripping the mace even harder in her hand.

Tell me again why I am doing this? There is a man with a head wound next to the garbage Dumpster who needs my help. Yeah, that's it. Just ignore the great big growling beastie.

Inching forward, she heard herself mumbling nonsense words. "It's okay, kitty...I'm just going to make sure he's okay." *Kitty. Did I just call that prehistoric throwback of a cat a kitty?*

A resonating growl slowed her movements. Nora knew, though, she had to make her way to the wounded man. Mustering courage she didn't feel, she took two more steps, keeping her eyes targeted at all times on the large cat. She watched spellbound when the cat licked its lips the minute the mugger pinned underneath him moved. The creature was most definitely male. Something inside her instantly recognized its strength. The massive cat placed a huge paw on the mugger's right arm. The mugger gave one agonized scream and then passed out. From the size of the beast Nora surmised the mugger's arm broke from the cat's weight. *Serves that bastard right!*

Reaching the wounded man, she turned all her attention to him. A large gash on the back of his head bled profusely. If she didn't stop the flow of blood he'd die. In order to heal him she had to drop her only aid – the mace.

Closing her eyes, Nora blocked out the surreal scene and focused the white healing power within her. The minute her hands tingled with heat she placed them directly on the man's large gash. Nora concentrated with all her might. Pouring her healing strength into the wounded man left her feeling queasy and dizzy. A rough lick on her arm startled Nora into complete awareness of her surroundings.

The beastie-cat brushed his sleek warm fur up against her and purred. *The cat purred at me.* Nora fought the hysterics threatening to erupt and calmly moved her bare arm out of reach of his massive teeth. Its two long canines were something straight out of a prehistoric textbook. The urge to run her hands through his lush mane of tiger-

striped hair rippled through her, singeing her own body with heat. *Weird reaction. Must be shock-induced.*

Then in a blur of speed straight out of an action movie the cat vanished into the black of the alley, leaving her shaky.

"My head. What happened?" asked the man she'd healed.

"My guess is *that* man attempted to mug you. I heard you calling for help."

The man moved to his knees, still holding his head. "Did you do that?" He pointed to the unconscious mugger.

"Nope. Not me. I think a big cat scared the shit out of him." Nora shakily got to her feet. "I've got to go. I'll escort you to a cab and you should call the police. If I were you I'd go to the hospital to get that wound looked at."

Nora's head snapped back to the dark alley. *I could have sworn I heard another growl.* Peering through the darkness, she shook her head. A gripping sadness engulfed her when Nora realized the massive beautiful creature of a cat had disappeared. Looking around for her shoes, she ran a hand through her hair in an attempt to get a grip—slightly alarmed with her sizzling reaction to the feral beast.

A few minutes later Nora walked into the washroom at Cara's Lounge, the place where she was supposed to meet her date for the night. Once she'd washed the man's blood off her hands she strode to the bar and looked around. The note had said her date would be holding a tiger lily. She didn't see anyone with a flower so she ordered a cranberry and vodka, thinking to herself she deserved a drink after what she had witnessed. Thirty minutes later, on her second cranberry beverage, a man approached her carrying a box.

"Are you Nora?" asked the man.

She nodded.

"This is for you. Sign here, please."

Dumbfounded, Nora did as instructed. Perplexed, she opened the box and gasped. A tiger lily lay on top of a small note and underneath the paper was the old-fashioned nurse's uniform she had admired at Midnight Madness Lingerie Boutique. Taking out the note, she blushed bright pink.

Let me unleash the wild cat within you. Answer your door at midnight. Your blind date.

Shoving the note back into the box, Nora smiled. *Wow! Talk about a wild and unusual date.* Realizing she was in no condition to drive from both the alcohol and shock of what she'd seen earlier, Nora had the bartender call her a taxi. With only two hours to spare, she planned to dress for the part. A flutter of nervous anticipation spiraled through her senses, causing her core to heat and her body to flush all over.

Forty-five minutes later she was home. For a second she could have sworn she saw a large creature dart around the side of her cottage-style house. *Ridiculous. I'm just over-reacting because of what happened.* She gave a slightly terrified chuckle when she realized she had no idea exactly what she had encountered in the alley. For some unknown reason Nora hadn't been afraid of the cat...more mesmerized than terrified. It reminded her of those strange dreams she'd had during puberty when she'd transform into a majestic tiger. It had been around the same time her healing powers had emerged.

Huffing loudly at her silly behavior, she strode up the stone-cut pathway to her house that backed onto a thick forest. Her only neighbor for miles was Mrs. Cohen, who lived to the right of Nora's long graveled driveway. The scents of the conifer forest, fresh spruce and pine trees lining her backyard were soothing balms to her shaky nerves. Once inside the comfort of her house, Nora darted to her bedroom. Changing quickly into the short nurse's uniform, she pinned the pill box nurse's cap into her riot of curly orange hair. Taking a deep breath, she turned and looked at herself in the full-length mirror. Giving a coy smile, she decided not to put on the white nylons that were in the parcel.

Not everything can go his way. The idea of what she planned to do thrilled her. No one, let alone a man she didn't know, had ever sizzled her thoughts and sex like this

before. Who knew anticipation was just what the doctor ordered. She was glad she had asked Madam Sasha, the owner of the theater, about the guy. It wasn't like Nora to let anyone invade her private domain. After Sasha's glowing recommendation how could she refuse her date's request?

Laughing loudly at her thoughts, she froze like a deer caught in the headlights when her doorbell rang. The sound, startlingly loud, slammed a realization into her that if she answered it she would get exactly what she deserved.

Chapter Two

Hank Bowman was thrilled to be allowed inside the woman's house. His little mind thrust to get her to trust him certainly worked in his favor. The fact she let him in meant she trusted and wanted him. He planned to use her lust to his advantage. The sizzle of sex and unspoken desires stroked the air around them. Shutting the door behind him, Hank followed her straight toward the living room.

"Unbutton the dress." Hank knew his stride was confident and sexy. He also knew she liked what she saw.

Her hands were hesitant and shaky, but he didn't dare help. She had to do this on her own. The woman wearing the old-fashioned nurse's uniform was his perfect fantasy come true. *And beneath those layers is a wild feline waiting to be unleashed. She just doesn't know it.*

"That's good. Now I do believe I should check your heart for any unusual palpitations." Hank wore a formal black suit, a prerequisite from his buddy Lance's sister, the same woman who had talked him, a Darklander werecat, into participating in a foolish blind date charity auction. Hank had wanted to say no but when his buddies Lance and Mitch agreed, he had to follow. All for a good cause but the werecat he was didn't like the restrictive clothing. He had, however, thoroughly enjoyed having the opportunity to preen onstage. Taking another look at the luscious woman in front of him, Hank felt the urge to get down on his knees and thank the Goddess Sakhmet for sending him to that ridiculous auction. Or maybe he should thank his warlock buddy's sister, Sasha, who had created a safe haven for Darklanders needing to vent off a little steam.

Hank resisted the urge to rip off his tight-fitting suit. Normally he wore doctor's scrubs when in human mode. The restriction of clothing always made his tiger side

itchy and his mountain lion side cranky. He moved closer to the exotic beauty sitting quietly but breathing heavily on the hard wooden stool he'd purposely posed her on. After the basics of introductions had been made they had quickly dispensed with chitchat.

Absentmindedly he fingered the black Zorro mask he wore. Hank felt comforted knowing she couldn't identify him and that she had no idea of the true identity of the man who planned to fuck her senseless. His hand grasped the stethoscope. He held it poised over her heaving chest, noting with pleasure the pink hue of her fair, freckled skin. The traditional nurse's cap she wore on her head had tilted slightly to the right, making her appear more perfect. She licked those red rosy lips of hers and a deep hunger to plunder them sailed through him. He felt his hair ripple and fought the beastly urge to charge and claim her.

"Is everything okay, doctor?"

Her voice, a husky cadence, a lullaby purr, sent seductive healing notes of warmth spiraling through his body.

"It's serious. I will need to thoroughly check you out." He grinned, noting her posture immediately relax with his teasing. She flashed a smile at him and his cock jumped to life under her direct gaze.

His mother would say the woman resembled the Goddess herself with her beauty. A riot of tiger-orange-hued hair fell in tight ringlets to frame her tiny face, which was peppered with beautiful light brown freckles everywhere. He judged her to be in her early thirties and his gut told him she'd age gracefully. The soft curls immediately drew him to her eyes. Green cat-knowing eyes captivated him with their insight and playfulness.

Come out to play, kitty kitty. The minute she flashed those green eyes flecked with gold at him was the moment Hank's inner cats snarled at him. *Mine. Take her. Claim her. Mate with her.*

Hank lowered the scope to her right breast, teasing the cold flat metallic object around her right C-cup with detailed precision. If there was one thing Hank knew it was breasts. They were his specialty. Over the past three years he'd performed so many breast implants, reductions and reconstructive surgeries that he could tell you with one glance the exact cup size of a woman's breasts.

"Is that cold?" He already knew the answer.

She nodded, biting on her lower lip.

"Then I'll just have to warm you up, nurse." Hank grinned, again attempting to part the nurse's uniform.

Her hand whipped out and stopped him. Her hold on his wrist, full of feline strength, surprised him.

"No."

"No?" Through her thin uniform he felt her heart beat faster, but her eyes froze him—fear. Stark terror held her at bay. Hank released her. He wouldn't push her even though he desperately wanted to see those two lush mounds.

The night had taken an unusual direction after the blind date auction. Having heard a man cry for help from the alley, Hank allowed his werecat to take over and it had been then he'd snagged her scent. All woman. Sensual, alluring healing heat radiated in bright hues of sparkling orange and red around her. She hadn't been terrified of him. Instead, spellbound, Hank had watched her inch forward, forcing her own fear to heel so she could save the victim's life with her hands. Witnessing her healing the man had almost knocked him over. If he hadn't been watching her so intently he would have missed the flicker of the cat within her who screamed, *"Let me out...release me!"*

Tonight that's exactly what Hank planned, to let the wild cat roaming within her free. He'd used his feline telepathy to discern who she was and quickly read the sexual fantasy she longed for. Discovering she was the woman who had won him as her blind date caused him to preen with satisfaction. Knowing her sexual fantasy was wanting to

play doctor with him, his beast of a cat purred in ecstasy. So here Hank was—playing doctor when he really was one.

“All right, nurse.” Hank lowered himself to his knees, purposefully using his wide shoulders to part her legs. Again a moment’s hesitation met his attempt but then he felt her relax, parting her legs more on the stool so he could move his body between her thighs. The advantage was hers now. On his knees he had to look up at her while she sat poised on the tall stool. She was like a Goddess and he planned to worship her.

Hank moved lower. She had a doctor fixation, but his mind thrust had also revealed she felt her body was inadequate. *Inadequate my ass.*

“Lovely curls. Nothing I admire more than a true redhead.” He was glad he had insisted she remove her panties earlier. He blew a hot breath across her pussy, aching to dip his finger in to see if she was wet for him.

She harrumphed at him and a brief smile flew across her face.

Her immediate response to his praise confirmed what he felt. She judged herself too harshly. “Naughty, nurse...are you questioning my taste?”

She giggled, causing her breasts to jiggle. Hank stilled his hands that wanted to rip open the small black hooks keeping her tits from his view. He used the opportunity to leverage his body up so his mouth could latch on to her right breast through the bra. She gasped. Hank flicked his tongue back and forth over her sensitive nipple and then moved his mouth to her other breast to reward it also. Two large wet stains appeared on her bra. Her entire body quivered from his ministrations. The cats within him purred. He could see all her reactions perfectly even though the room was only lit with two flickering red candles that smelled of strawberries.

“Oh my. I forgot what that feels like.”

“I’m just getting started. When I’m done with my exam I want that pussy cream of yours to be sliding out of that warm cunt. Then I’m going to give you your annual checkup...you naughty little kitty.”

“Did you just call me kitty?”

Hank gave the insides of her thighs a lick, tasting her heat and unique scent, reminding him of fresh flowers.

“Yes, I did. Let’s unleash that kitty of yours.” To emphasize his point he moved his tongue higher, giving a rough scrape along her wet folds. Her body melted into his touch, her legs instinctively opening to him, allowing him to take her passion-induced scent into his body.

Hank’s rock-hard erection created a tent as it pushed painfully up against the zipper of his dress pants. He growled. His cats felt too constricted in the suit. Forcing himself to behave, he used his fingertips to outline her heaving breasts. She unhooked the lower portion of the uniform, parting the fabric in a slow tease. Her tiny exposed bellybutton teased him. “No laughing,” he cautioned, lowering his body once again so he could swivel his tongue inside her round bellybutton. She stifled a giggle.

“Nurse, I do believe I said no laughing. Your naughtiness will not go unpunished. Spread your legs wider for me.”

When she didn’t do as instructed Hank grasped both her legs and hoisted them over his shoulders. Hank moved his head between her legs and used his thick tongue to give her swollen pussy lips another rough lick. *A real wild feline redhead, bless you.*

She clutched his shoulders to hang on. Hank realized in an instant the way she sat on the stool made her uncomfortable. He unhooked her legs from his shoulders and was pleased when she gave a small oomph of surprise.

“Don’t worry, kitten, I’m not done with you yet.” He scooped her up, cradling her small frame in his arms, and moved to the large sofa. Laying her down on the cushions, Hank made sure her play uniform came totally undone. She immediately clutched the front, keeping her breasts from him. He smiled knowingly at her and felt her relax when he didn’t attempt to move the fabric.

Hank loved that she hadn’t bothered to put on the white nylons that came with the uniform. Besides breasts, Hank loved toes. Immensely so. He popped her big toe into his mouth and suckled it, sweeping his tongue around and inside her other toes,

pleased with her immediate reaction. She gasped and leveraged herself up onto her elbows to watch him suck her tiny appendages. Her head then lowered back and those sweet puckered nipples of hers stretched tight across her uniform. *Toes are sensitive objects and should be worshipped. Especially cute, tiny toes that are painted pink.* That was Hank's thinking and he had yet to find a woman who objected to his ministrations.

She oohed her pleasure. Hank felt the cat within her stretch, her body purring into its sexual awareness as his tongue savored the feel of her dainty big toe. He moved his mouth to her other toes, paying special attention to her pinky toe. Letting his fingers climb up her other leg, he couldn't resist running a finger through her now wet pussy curls. She immediately parted her legs wider, an open invitation for oral sex.

"Nurse, I'm not done punishing you," admonished Hank.

"I don't think I can take any more."

Hank knew she had no idea she purred her words or rubbed her body passionately up against him, marking him with her sexy scent. The cat within her was leashed tight with sexual want and need and he was the beast to spur her into heat.

Moving to her silky bare legs, Hank applied a dozen kisses followed with small love nips, loving the satiny feel of her skin. Inhaling deeply, he finally registered the subtle body lotion she wore as freesia. It was light, airy, with a fruity flavor his tongue enjoyed tasting.

"You will and you can, Nurse. You wouldn't want me to report you now, would you?" *Wow, I could really get into this role-playing thing.*

"I don't want that, Doctor. I would do anything to keep my job." She flashed perfect white teeth at him and winked at him coyly. A second later the big toe on her other foot was deep in his mouth. He ran his tongue around it and across the flesh connecting her second toe, loving her moans as he lightly chewed on every single one of her toes. Then Hank worked his way back up her legs to her moist heat.

She whimpered her pleasure the minute his tongue savored her musky taste. Boldly, his mouth kissed her swollen pussy. Hank tried to go slow but her taste was like

the best dessert he'd ever sampled. He wanted more. He became addicted to the tangy, flowery taste of her cream. It was a taste that would haunt him because, try as he might, Hank had a feeling he wouldn't be able to forget her. A pure breed Darklander werecat, Hank was known as a *Sakhu-were*, making him extra special. To be *Sakhu* was to be blessed by the goddess Sakhmet, who governed all felines in his realm. When he went feral and turned into his wild feline he became a prehistoric mix between that of a tiger and mountain lion and anyone with any smarts who saw him ran away as fast as their legs could carry them. There were those few who, like his mother, had the double blessing of being able to turn into one solid cat form and the ability to shift into their baser *Sakhu-were* forms. That blessing had been bestowed upon Nora. The fact she was blissfully unaware there were two raging felines living within her astonished Hank.

The werecat he was recognized her instantly as his mate. The man he tried to be sought another reason for his unusual reaction to the wild feline of a woman lying underneath him.

Hank plunged his tongue deep into her wet opening, now lapping up the cream sliding out of her cunt in earnest. Using his finger, he pebbled her clit until it beaded into a tight bud from his ministrations. She moved her hips up, allowing his mouth to grind into her pussy.

Seconds away from climaxing because he was damn good at what he did, she grasped his head and snarled—the feline within her claiming her unaware. He gave her nub a small nip, sending her spiraling over that mark. Her orgasm racked her and he loved the jet of cream that slid out of her pulsing hot core. And then seconds later she turned on him.

Hank barely made it off the sofa unscratched. He knew his scent had truly awakened what had been lying dormant within her. Instinct took over as he turned, morphing into his true werecat form. She yowled and screamed as the cat within her finally emerged. She shook her lush mane, her fur rippling into its majestic beauty from the fast transformation from human into a wild cat.

There before him stood his mate. A Royal Bengal tiger, proud, defiant and holy – snarling her displeasure at him. Green-flecked yellow eyes held his gaze. He lowered his head, acknowledging her ownership over him. He waited and breathed deep, filling his heart, soul and mind with her unique tiger scent. Then he lay down, passively allowing her the right to either kill him or make love to him. It was the most painful moment of Hank's life.

Giving up one's self to another. Allowing his mate to set the pace. Hoping she understood the tiger within her enough to make the right choice because when the beast was wild, it was sometimes a good thing to run and hide.

Nora felt heightened. Feral. Wild. Free. The heat that usually encompassed her ability to heal had changed every cell within her body. At first it had been mind-numbing pain but then clarity...the rush of it changed her. She let it. Let that heat that had always threatened her sanity take hold of her. The feeling so right she finally understood what she was.

The knowledge she was different, had always been so and would always be, did not faze her. She had been unique already. Her inherent healing ability had marked her, but that had only been a start. She felt whole and powerful. Tonight for the first time she let that wild feeling take hold and breathed deep, feeling her feline muscles bunch and flex, her sleek coat shockingly soft. Her long whiskers twitched, the scent of her mate stealing into her soul. She ambled forward, her focus on him only.

She watched him acknowledge her, lying down to await her judgment, and she preened. She became the dominant one. She would choose him, but he didn't know it. His anxiety poured off his coat, his sides heaving while he forced a passive pose. He waited for her to make her move. The choice was hers. Shaking her head, Nora moved toward him. With purpose she rubbed her body up against his, letting him feel her lust and scent her sex.

Instinct made her need to mark him, to rub her sex-induced feline scent all over him. Then with speed that should have shocked her, the werecat he was broke free, turning on her, forcing her onto her back. She let him have his victory, sensing he was only teasing her with his strength. His large mouth clamped tightly around her throat. She purred at him and felt his hold relax. He moved off her throat and licked her roughly. Then, using her might, Nora forced him off completely.

Thinking they were on even footing, he backed off. Nora used that time to sprint from the living room. Using her newfound strength, she broke through the kitchen screen door without a second thought. The growl that resonated from him was loud and clear. The chase was on.

Catch me if you can...or if you dare.

The call of the wild beckoned to her. She inhaled the sweet pine and spruce forest that rested on her property and marveled anew at the night's sounds and scents as they sailed into her consciousness. Everything became a hundred times more vivid. Spectrums of colors caused her feline eyes to savor the tiniest aspect within the forest and the sounds from the scampering of a mouse about two miles away to the flight of the bats overhead sounded as if a speaker had been hooked up to her ears. Nora loved it all.

Caught up in her new surroundings, Nora didn't hear him until it was too late. He leaped at her—pinning her tightly to the mossy forest floor. He was angry, the cats within him feral—she'd teased both man and beast. Then he turned back into man.

Instinctively she turned too, unaware she did until the pain of the morphing back into a human had completed and she breathed hard from it.

"Knees. Now," said Hank.

Hank was amazed at how gruff his voice sounded. He was pissed. He felt as if the cats within him just had their tails yanked and he didn't like it. But he wasn't about to let her free. He needed to claim her. She was his.

"You are my mate." He growled the words in an angry huff of air on her now totally bare skin. Then his gaze got riveted by what he saw. "You are marked."

She attempted to cover her breasts but he wouldn't let her. Hank leaned down, took his time to examine her mark and grinned. "Is this why you wouldn't show them to me earlier?"

She nodded.

"Do you know what it means?"

"Yeah, bad birthmarks," she said flippantly.

Hank couldn't resist. Grasping her arms, he leashed her to him. His tongue darted out to trail around the two small bright pink paw prints scoring the undersides of both breasts. "You are a *Sakhu-were*, like me."

She hissed. "Don't even understand what you are saying but that sounds impossible."

"I think you just changed into the impossible. And I will help you discover your true potential."

"Don't flatter yourself. How did you manage to keep that mask on?" Her green eyes were full of mischief.

"It's amazing what a cat can do when it sets its mind to it." He flipped her over, pushing her more into the soft, cool forest floor. Using his hands, he raised her hips, exposing her ass to his wild gaze.

"You are mine." His cock moved to her slick opening and this time there was no hesitation. One minute he sat poised at her entrance and the next he was buried to the hilt, his thick shaft stretching her walls until she relaxed, letting his dominant nature take over.

He thrust deep and growled...the sound once again awakening the wild tiger within her. She stretched, using her knees to allow her stance to widen, letting him pound into her, mark her, take her like the wild beasts they both were. She screamed

her pleasure, the sound a rumbling purr of satisfaction when his hands moved to her breasts. He played with her nipples, tweaking them until they burned from his playful fingers, and then he moved his hand lower. Using two fingers, he found her clit. He pinched it hard. Nora climaxed, her pussy muscles flexing madly around his cock as hot jets of his semen poured into her. She milked his shaft with loving strokes, the cat within her purring its pleasure.

Hank nipped a loving kiss on her neck before he slid his slick body off hers, taking a roll so that most of his weight wasn't on her and they were both lying nestled, totally satisfied on the moss. Complete weariness was overcoming Nora after her first turn into a tiger. Sighing, she nestled closer to him. Her throaty purr went straight to Hank's still-pounding heart and semi-hard cock.

Awareness of the consequences of his claiming her and unleashing the cat within her shook Hank. Raw, evocative emotions surfaced. It dawned on Hank that unlocking the cats within her might be the trap to take away his freedom for good. Taming a werecat was not a livable option. They were both wild, free beasts governed by rules the Darklander Goddess Sakhmet herself decreed at a whim.

Hank hadn't known any other colors except shades of gray, white and black when he'd lived in the Darklander realm. He didn't understand how Nora's cats could have lain dormant for so long on Earth. Most Darklanders had strong mind-shields that prevented other beings like himself or the magical creatures on his world from reading them, but not the humans and he had easily accessed Nora's mind.

A flashback to his days in the Darklander realm tore through him. Glad that peace finally had been established on his world, and that the standard of living had vastly improved, he was pleased Nora hadn't lived through the civil war that had ravaged his home. Werecat Darklanders were notoriously industrious and most members of his pride had become architects, doctors or diplomatic ambassadors to the Darklander Mistress. The general human population must not know of the Darklanders' existence.

That had been key to the peace treaty brokered with Earth's United Nations and the Mistress of the Darklander Council.

Nora subtly moved against him, her arm sliding across his still-heaving chest. Hank closed his eyes, loving the intimacy. The cats who co-existed within him wanted nothing other than to take her again and again throughout the night, not caring about the consequences. The dual nature of his life was a bitch because he didn't dare let her discover he posed as a human doctor when really a wild beast lived within him.

Chapter Three

The shrill alarm jack-knifed Hank into a sitting position. It took him a full thirty seconds to realize what he'd done. He'd fallen asleep. After having mind-blowing sex in the forest, something he'd thoroughly enjoyed, he had carried his exhausted sex-kitten back to her house and had meant to deposit her in her bed, alone. However she'd looked so cuddly that the cats within him had insisted he lay next to her for a few minutes. Minutes had obviously turned into hours. Hank raked a hand through his ruffled hair.

In disbelief he watched Nora smash the snooze button on the clock radio, not yet realizing he was in the bed with her. Using what precious time he had, he attempted to climb out without her noticing. Moving, it dawned on him that the mask had come undone. It lay somewhere in the bed.

Shit, could this get any worse? Apparently so, because a warm hand on his back stilled his slow progress out of the bed.

"You stayed. You know I had this really strange dream about wild cats and running through the forest naked. Talk about weird. I must have had more to drink than I remember."

The husky purr of her voice woke up his cats and his cock. Rock-hard in one heartbeat, it took a lot of willpower for Hank to continue to slide his body out of her warm sheets. The hot scent of sleep and ripe, sex-filled woman snarled through his veins. But Hank knew come morning he had to ignore the beast. Come daylight he donned his human persona and actually went to work.

Hank still found it hard to believe that a decade ago he'd been allowed to leave the Darklander world to venture to Earth to pursue his dream of working as a human doctor. Previously he had worked in his realm as a doctor, enabling him to thoroughly

study humans. It had taken years for the Darklander Mistress to grant him his request but it had been more than worth the wait. A world of vast colors and strong emotions had greeted his werecat eyes and senses. Growing up in the Darklander realm had been brutal, but for most of it Hank didn't know any other life. Except the life his buddy Mitch, a Darklander vampire, had talked about. Inwardly, Hank's body shivered as Nora teased a nail down his bare spine. The urge to turn, not caring he was unmasked, and take her once again, bit into him, almost choking him with need. But he didn't dare turn around. Thankfully he was saved by the alarm, again. Her hand left his back and he bucked out of the bed, grabbed the discarded clothes he'd obviously had the good sense to bring back into the house with him, and fled out her bedroom faster than a Darklander werecat racing through the wild drákon forests. Hank immediately shut the door to her room behind him. Keeping a firm hold on the door handle, he shimmied into his pants, foregoing doing up his dress shirt or bothering with shoes.

"Thanks again, kitten. See you tonight and don't forget to bid high...all the money goes to charity, remember." He chuckled to himself, pleased he'd agreed to participate in the auction.

Hank sprinted down the hall. He turned his head, catching the movement of his woman entering the corridor, but before she could see his face fully he slammed her front door hard, running straight into an old lady with curlers in her blue-gray hair holding out a newspaper.

"Sorry about that." Mumbling, he steadied the old lady, making sure she was okay, and then he made a dash down the long driveway. Still running, he rounded the block in record time. Pleased again with his foresight to bring his car to her place and not give in to the urge to go there in werecat form, Hank unlocked his car. Navigating the early morning traffic, Hank realized his sleepover meant he didn't have time to go home, shower or change. He had an eight a.m. surgery scheduled and a prep meeting beforehand, so his only choice was to drive straight to the hospital. Thankfully he always kept spare scrubs and a change of clothing in his locker at work.

The skies opened, sending a deluge of rain down from the heavens, just when Hank sought to find a silver lining to his hectic, unusual morning. His cats howled their displeasure. They didn't like rain. If they had their way he'd be back in his mate's bed ensuring his scent never left her while plunging his cock over and over again deep within her wet pussy.

He wiped his face, realizing instantly her sweet musky scent still lingered on his fingers. A wide grin split his face as he vividly fantasized what he planned to do to her tonight after she bid once again on him. He preened and his cats purred, liking the notion of strutting his stuff onstage for his woman, his mate, his werecat.

Hank knew she thought she'd dreamt last night because of how fast her transformation had been. He was fairly certain come tonight, once the sun set, the felines within her would ensure she knew reality from fantasy.

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Disbelief poured like a rippling fissure through her mind and body. For one delirious, delightful moment Nora had been comforted realizing he'd stayed the night. She just wished she could vividly recall exactly what they did together. She did remember bidding on him at the charity auction, meeting him at her house and playing doctor. However, the fine details of the night mystified her and the not knowing started to piss her off. She giggled, the sound startling her. It sounded more like a raspy purr than her normal voice. *I must need coffee.* Watching her date flee from her bedroom faster than a zing of lightning made her shiver. *Talk about making one feel cheap and dirty.* Nora hugged her bathrobe tight as she answered the door.

"Thought you might be wanting your newspaper before it got soaked," said Mrs. Cohen.

Nora took the newspaper, noting the rain. She had always hated getting wet but this morning the urge to skip work and slink back under the covers stole through her. She shook her head, resisting the urge to do just that. "Thank you, Mrs. Cohen. I've told

you before you don't have to return it when you're done reading it. I get one at work. And you shouldn't be walking that long driveway in your slippers. You're going to get soaked."

Nora's house was fairly secluded. Her only neighbor was Mrs. Cohen who lived in a small, neat, pale yellow bungalow at the end of Nora's driveway. The area was mostly overgrown bushes and dense trees. It wasn't close to schools, malls or many houses. That's why Nora had bought it. She had always liked the wildness of the forest as her backyard.

Mrs. Cohen fingered the large curls in her partially blue-gray colored hair. "It's only rain; I'm not going to melt and slippers, bah! Say, that man of yours ran out of here mighty quick. It must be one heck of an emergency. Nice man though."

"Really?" Sarcasm dripped like venom from her tight-pressed lips.

"Oh yeah, while he did almost knock me down those steps he took the time to make sure I was fine. But I've got the gift of insight. Passed down from my father's side of the family."

Nora didn't have time for one of Mrs. Cohen's tirades about her psychic abilities. Her normal quick morning routine had been thrown out the window.

"Those kind, caring, green cat eyes of his remind me of yours. That's how I know he'll do good for you."

A hard lump formed in Nora's throat.

"Ahh, now don't be thinking he's like that other scum you dated. Best thing he did was leave you. Trust me on that one." Mrs. Cohen reached out, giving Nora's hand a reassuring, motherly squeeze.

The last thing Nora needed in her life was another mother giving her so-called good advice. When her fiancé had dumped her, her own mother had told Nora it must be her fault and that she should go back and beg for his forgiveness. The only fault had been him finally discovering her two strange birthmarks. After six months into the

relationship she had finally given in and had sex with him without keeping her shirt on. His one look had said it all. She was flawed. Damaged goods. Weird.

If only he had known half of the weird stuff in my life. Nora vividly recalled what had happened in the alley on the way to the lounge to meet her blind date. She gave a loud snort, which sounded more like an angry hiss to her sensitive ears.

"You okay, Nora?"

She took another look at Mrs. Cohen. The baby powder scent she used on her skin along with the pungent smell of her lilac perfume and hair dye caused Nora's nose to wrinkle and her stomach to heave. Hurriedly she said, "Thanks again, Mrs. Cohen. I'm sorry but I really do need to run. I'm going to be late for work."

Mrs. Cohen nodded and Nora shut the door. Foregoing the shower, she dressed in her usual nurse's uniform with the bright pink and blue teddy bears on it. Ten minutes later she was en route to the hospital. There was no way she was going to be late this morning. She'd promised Becky, the six-year-old little girl who had been in the hospital for the past month, that when the time came for her lower jaw to be reconstructed she'd be in the operating room with her the entire time. Nora would never break a promise to someone in need.

After this morning Becky would finally be able to smile, something the little girl had never achieved, having been born without a lower jaw. The cruelty of her birth had caused Becky's parents to divorce, leaving the little girl's mother, a single, hard-working mom, scraping by. Every penny the mother earned went into the medical bills that must be in the thousands of dollars. She felt a surge of anger at the injustice of the world and a system that wouldn't help pay for a little girl to smile. Could Nora understand the mother's sacrifices? *Yes. I would do the same thing.*

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An hour later, Nora started to scrub up. Years ago she had worked in the OR as a nurse but when the posting came up for the children's ward, Nora had never looked

back. She peeked through the window of the OR's door and noticed the surgeon was already inside speaking directly to Becky. Nora's entire body was throbbing. Her panties started to dampen with inescapable hunger and her nipples puckered against the rough cotton of her uniform. *What the hell is happening to me?* Turning her attention to Becky, Nora fought for normalcy. She could tell by the little girl's behavior that the surgeon was reassuring her, telling her everything would be okay. Nora prayed he was correct.

Pushing the door open with her elbows, Nora went straight to Becky. Speaking through the OR face mask, she immediately took the girl's tiny hand.

"Everything's going to be fine, Becky. I'm here."

The girl turned her head and blinked hard at Nora.

"I was just explaining to Becky here that she'll never be able to frown again," teased the surgeon.

He had moved behind Becky's head, talking quietly to the anesthetist, so Nora didn't reply. It pleased her he'd taken the time to explain things to the little girl. Nora had known many surgeons who simply walked in, did their job and never looked in on the patient afterward. His consideration and kind words warmed her heart, which beat double-time. Immediately moving to the farthest corner of the OR, she watched the surgeon's back, knowing he was doing his routine. She'd worked with enough surgeons over the years to know they didn't like to be disturbed when it came to their prep rituals. *Not that I can blame them. I think I'd need my own rosary if I had to do what this surgeon's about to do. Please God, let him make her look normal. I'm not asking for a miracle, just a smile.*

"She's out. Ready, Hank," said the anesthetist.

Nora glanced at the clock. It was eight thirty in the morning. If all went well the surgery would be over in four hours. She watched the surgeon called Hank work. He diligently worked at creating a lower jaw for Becky and time slowed in that surreal way

when everyone in the room focused on the job. It was painstaking, detailed work. For close to four hours Hank worked on the little girl.

“Done. Finally.” The surgeon straightened, gave a weary sigh and handed his last piece of medical equipment to the head nurse. The nurse counted all the material, double-checking nothing was unaccounted for. With a nod from the head nurse the surgeon picked up Becky’s hand.

“We made you a smile, Becky. When you wake up I’ll come to see you.”

Nora eyed the head nurse. With her permission she walked to Becky’s other side. Taking the girl’s other hand, she gave her a reassuring squeeze.

“Thank you, Doctor.” Nora looked across Becky to see two startled green eyes staring at her, wide with shock.

Immediate heat flushed her face. A hiss tore from her a moment before his gravelly words of “Oh no” penetrated her panicked mind. She took a step back, clutched the OR nurse’s arm in a frantic grasp for support and then fainted.

“Wake up, Nora.” The harsh command came from the head nurse, who placed a cold compress on Nora’s now pale face.

Nora’s eyes flew open. “Where did he go?”

The nurse pursed her lips into a tight frown. “Go. Do you mean Hank?”

“Yeah, him.”

“The minute he made sure you were okay he made a beeline out of here as if his life depended on it. Something going on between you two I should know about?”

“No!” Nora attempted to get up.

“You’re not the fainting type, Nora, so take care. I’m going to pretend this incident did not happen in my OR...you hear me?”

Nora nodded.

“Good, because I like you. And I like Hank. He’s our best reconstructive surgeon. Not sure why he stays here when he could make a fortune with his own practice but I know one thing...whatever’s going on between you and him, keep it out of my OR.”

With those parting words the nurse walked out, letting the OR door swing wide. Shaky, totally disoriented and feeling out of her element, Nora stood and then slowly walked out of the OR.

It’s not possible. It couldn’t be him. That’s too much of a coincidence. The minute she thought that her nostrils flared. His scent. That forest- fresh scent that had saturated her sheets, reminding her of warm rain, hot male and fresh Irish Spring soap, seeped into her senses. Opening her eyes, she realized there was no mistaking those feral, knowing cat-eyes of his. In her heart Nora knew surgeon Hank hadn’t been playing doctor last night—he was a doctor. The bigger question, what was he really hiding behind all the masks he wore?

Angry he had made her appear a fool, especially at work, she marched down the hall determined to strip him bare, anything to make him cringe. Tearing off the OR gown, she dumped it in a laundry basket and headed to Recovery. Before she entered she spotted Becky’s mother crying softly.

“It’s okay, Marila, she’s fine.”

Becky’s mom looked up and smiled. “I know. The surgeon was just here. He explained everything to me. I can’t believe it.” Tears still streamed down her face. Nora took a seat next to her.

“Then why are you crying?”

“We have no one, so when he told me the hospital bill was paid for by an anonymous donor I thought he must be mistaken. But not only did he reassure me that the bill was paid, but that wonderful surgeon told me that in the years ahead all of Becky’s medical bills would be paid until her smile was perfect. Every cent I’ve earned has gone toward Becky. I’m not saying I’m regretting the sacrifices I’ve had to make but now, not having to pay, we can get a nice place. We’ve been living for the last five years

in a one-room apartment. We don't even have a bedroom. Becky and I share the fold-out sofa. This...this will mean so much to her."

Tears pooled in Nora's eyes. A hard lump formed in her throat. Without a doubt she knew exactly who the anonymous donor was. *Hank. But why? Why would he do that?* Try as she might the anger she'd had fueling her confrontation dissipated in one swoosh. Instead something warm and comforting settled deep inside her to nestle close to her heart. Could Hank be as caring as she started to suspect? And if so, was there a way she could charm that caring emotion of his to focus on her?

"Out of the frying pan and into the fire," muttered Nora.

"Did you say something?" asked Marila.

"No. I'm going to check on Becky. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Marila nodded and Nora gently let go of her hand. She entered the Recovery room. There holding Becky's hand was Hank. He turned and watched her approach.

She went to Becky's other side. They were once again in the same position as when their mutual discovery had knocked them both for a loop. Or so Nora hoped.

"You're Becky's nurse?"

His voice was gravelly low but there was a definite nervous pitch to it, pleasing Nora. She nodded, while her heart sped up and that steady throb between her legs contracted the muscles in her womb. Vaguely, Nora felt she was missing something deadly important as her gaze took all of Hank in.

"I'm Hank."

"Nora. You know you look familiar to me?" She noticed he now wore blue surgeon scrubs. A pulsing memory of being chased by him, letting him dominate her and her being wild like never before caused a flare to form in her stomach. It was a fierce spark of want.

"Sorry, can't say I've had the pleasure. This is my first time in the children's ward."

His whispered lying voice caught at her. She knew he was deliberately keeping his face down to avoid looking at her.

Nora caught sight of his brown whiskered face, the shadow of his early morning beard stroking every instinct within her that yearned to reach out and run her fingers along the bristly ends of it.

She bit the inside of her cheek for clarity and gently caressed Becky's hand. Nora looked up, catching his unguarded stare. She immediately noticed how devilishly charming Hank was without the Zorro or surgeon's mask. "My mistake. By the way, you did a good job today in the OR. I watched you work, you're good with your hands."

A wide grin split across his face, immediately making him look dangerous and sexy.

"I'm glad you think so."

It was a polite reply but Nora sensed the sexual undercurrent of what was not said.

"Well, it was nice meeting you, Nora. I've had a busy night and I expect tonight to be even busier."

It was the mischievous glint in his eyes that made Nora yearn to sink to her knees. The urge to claw off all his clothing, strip him bare and lick his bronze skin screamed through her, making her dizzy. Worse, she felt he knew exactly what she was thinking.

"You know it's funny but you really do look familiar to me." Without thought she slinked closer to his still frame, purposely brushing up against him. Again his scent sailed into her. A rush of erotic memories—of something she had become—attempted to surface. Nora shook her head, feeling her long curly hair swish around her face.

"Guess I've got one of those faces. See you later."

He dashed out the door not letting her get the last word in, but then it dawned on Nora what he'd said. Without a doubt she knew he would once again be strutting his

assets on the theater's stage tonight. That wild feeling within her that beckoned to be released was definitely up to the challenge.

Oh yeah, Hank, I'll be seeing you tonight. All of you and I just dare you to wear a mask. 'Cause, baby, I'll rip that off your sexy face so fast I just might leave claw marks.

Chapter Four

"Don't even think of it," warned both Mitch and Lance for the second time. Really, they were harping at him like two old Darklander tomcats.

"Shut up, you two. I'm only telling you this cause...shit, I don't know why I told you." Hank's voice was a low mumble and for once he ignored the rare cheeseburger sitting in front of him with pink blood dripping down the side of the bun. Nervously, he ran his hands through his hair.

The minute he'd gotten to his office he'd emailed Mitch, stating he needed to talk to him in person about last night. The sun had set thirty minutes ago and while he wasn't thrilled Mitch had asked Lance along, he'd told them part of what had happened with his date.

"I knew we should have said no to your sister, Lance." Mitch's voice was gruff and dead serious.

Lance huffed. "When was the last time you tried to say no to Sasha?"

Lance was mad, his magical energy pulsing around him in crazed electrical circles he was totally unaware of. However, Hank's cats hated it. "Get a grip, Lance. Your magic is pissing off my cats."

"Fuck your cats," said Lance.

Hank snarled a threatening note. "I dare you to say that again."

"Shut up, you two. Look, I've got one hour until I pick up Tina and then she's going to that auction with her friends. We're all in deep shit, but at least you two don't have Lucifer breathing down your neck telling you to claim her."

"No way...he breathes?"

"Bet his breath stinks," snickered Hank.

Mitch ignored the tease.

"So what's your big problem anyway, Hank?" asked Lance, sitting back in the booth.

"My date is the other half of my feline soul."

Dishes could be heard clanking as Hank's buddies digested that tidbit of information.

"You sure?"

"One hundred percent sure. But it gets worse. She's a nurse at the hospital and today after I worked my own magic in the operating room we went face-to-face, if you get my meaning."

"You had oral sex in the OR, ugh...that's gross," said Lance.

Hank felt his shoulders relax as Lance's teasing broke the ice. His face cracked a feline smile. "No, you moron. She saw me without my mask on and her cat recognized me."

"Seems to me you have bigger problems than her cat recognizing you." Mitch's voice was flat, his brown eyes boring into Hank.

"Am I missing something? Hank's problem doesn't sound nearly as serious as mine or yours, if you ask me," stated Lance.

"Really, you think so...tell him, Hank," said Mitch.

Hank's cats growled a low, threatening note of warning telling him to keep his lips sealed. He sighed. "When two feline souls find each other it causes the female to go into heat."

Lance laughed until his sides hurt. "You lucky bastard."

"You forgot the important part, Hank," chided Mitch, playing with his food, making it look as if he'd eaten.

"Well, until our souls fuse together I will have to sexually service her but while she's in heat I'll also have to protect her from other Darklander werecats in the area

who will attempt to take her as their own. Oh and did I mention we werecats fight to the death for our mate?"

"Wait a sec, I thought you were the only werecat in the area. Did you just call her your mate?" asked Lance, still grinning.

"Does she recognize what she is?" interrupted Mitch.

"I don't think so. The change happened so fast I think she thinks it was a dream, but come tonight her cat will attempt to dominate her human side. She transformed into the most beautiful Bengal tiger I have ever seen. And you're right, Lance, I used to be the only werecat. Lately though, I've felt the pull of other Darklander weres who have moved into the area and now I know why. They have been getting whiffs of the feline scent she unknowingly casts off. And most assuredly she is my mate. She just doesn't know it yet."

"I thought she was a werecat."

"She is, but she doesn't recognize the dual nature of her feline so she didn't transform into her baser form."

"You cats are barbaric. You really fight to the death?" Lance flicked his finger, causing hot coffee to materialize just to irritate Hank.

"Really, last time I looked, warlock, you weren't all innocent. Seems to me you've killed a few warlocks in your time," said Mitch.

"They deserved it."

Mitch placed his hands on the table. "Enough of this. We're going to have to sort out our own problems with these females. I say we strut our stuff, let the women bid on us and then fuck them senseless."

Hank's werecat side purred its own happy answer. The notion of fucking was a nice pat, a gentle stroke setting his cock on fire.

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Shaky with need, Nora couldn't stop thinking about Hank. All day her thoughts had centered on him. The minute she had returned home she had vividly recalled what had happened to her the night before. Worse, she knew it wasn't a dream. It had been real. She felt that knowledge to her core, which throbbed for Hank.

She didn't want to be at the theater auction tonight but she had no choice. Bailing on her friends wasn't an option. Thinking those thoughts, she'd looked at the stage and gasped.

"I'm going to kill him for what he did to me," she mumbled.

"Who?" asked Cindy and Tina in unison.

"That bloody doctor, Hank. There strutting his stuff wearing the tiger-striped swim trunks," snarled Nora.

"What's wrong with your voice, Nora?" asked Cindy, shifting on her chair.

"Nothing that a big beastie-cat can't fix," answered Nora.

Cindy didn't say anything to her and Tina was too busy downing her drink to notice anything unusual, which was totally out of character.

"Ladies, are you bidding tonight?" asked Madam Sasha, the manager of the theater.

Growling to herself, Nora mumbled, "I am most certainly not bidding."

"Oh," answered Cindy, taking a sip of her drink, her hand a bit unsteady, as she focused her eyes on the black tablecloth.

Sasha looked around the room. "The ladies love your men but your men expect *you* to bid on them"

"I can't take another minute of this. I'm out of here." Nora felt a mad sweep of anger, causing her hair to frizz even more. Grabbing her sweater, she stormed away from the table before Tina and Cindy could stop her.

Chapter Five

Ruffled, seething with anger, Nora slinked from the hall out into the dark streets, not caring in her haste that she'd forgotten her purse or her mace. The moon was full and her senses caught the whiff of a nearby park. Needing the solitude, she strode forward with purpose, not caring that people glanced at her in a shocked way. She already knew her hair was wild and frizzy from the night's mist and no amount of hair product would fix that.

"Looking for some loving?"

The voice petted her with softness, taking away that burning itch she'd had all afternoon to rub up against something to alleviate the throb in her pussy. She stepped into the park, her eyes seeking the male. A feral smile creased the angry lines around her mouth. She purred a welcome.

He strode forward. Tall, brawny power filled with testosterone. But he didn't make her burn like Hank. Then before her eyes the prehistoric cat from the night before hurled himself with deadly intent at the man. A blur of movement saw the other male transform in a heartbeat into a black jaguar, sleek, powerful but not nearly as deadly as Hank. And it was Hank. She knew that now. The wild side of her recognized the scent that had ensnared her last night.

The change happened so fast Nora screamed several times before she realized she'd gone from being a normal angry woman to a Royal Bengal tiger who was downright ferocious. She growled, giving in to her cat, who scented death and sex. The combination stroked her baser instincts and then all of what had happened to her last night crashed into her mind—how Hank's scent had marked her, unleashing the wild cat within her. He had told her there was a werecat like him lurking within her, and he was going to enjoy mastering her. *Not in this lifetime.*

Bounding to her feet in feline grace, Nora dashed away from the pull of death, not caring that two males were fighting over her. The longing for the forest, her woods, her home...her sanctuary was what she needed. Fearing she'd totally lost her mind and senses, Nora let what she'd become take her where she needed to go.

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Death becomes you, Darklander jaguar. Hank opened his mind to speak directly to his opponent. His jaw clamped down a fraction more onto the right shoulder blade of the jaguar. He felt the jaguar shudder but the beast snarled openly, defiant.

Relaxing his hold, Hank let the jaguar jump away. The two cats faced each other eye-to-eye, stretched-tight whiskers almost bristling, hair statically on end, as they went at it beast to beast. It was an ancient choreographed dance of death. One paw marked a movement right, the other followed suit waiting for the perfect opening to claim that final crowning achievement – death. Tonight only one male would walk away.

She is mine. My mate. Hank hoped the proud jaguar would listen and bow down in defeat.

So you are the prehistoric throwback the others scented. The jaguar's words were a deadly snarl snapping inside Hank's mind.

Prehistoric throwback. Hank planned to make sure the jaguar died a slow death after tossing that remark. *Others. What others?* He pushed into the beast's mind using his abilities to decipher the truth. The jaguar fighting him was young and a member of a new Darklander werepride recently allowed in the human realm. Young and cock-sure, he had fled his pride for attempting to claim a mated female. Usually pride leaders made examples of young males who attempted such openly defiant acts and Hank knew it was up to him to now to put the young jaguar in his place.

The jaguar jumped in a startling act, catching Hank off guard. His teeth ripped through flesh, scraping over bone. Hank's cats yowled in agony and anger. The jaguar bit again, gouging out more flesh on Hank's left shoulder while slashing his face with

his right paw. Surging up, Hank used his large canine teeth to deliver a fatal blow straight to the jaguar's exposed neck, claiming his life as was his right. The jaguar gave one surprised gasp and then transformed back into human form. Hank followed suit, the change painful.

A moment of pity pulsed through him. He shook that off.

The jaguar had delivered a damaging blow to Hank and had he not been the werecat he was he wouldn't still be standing. As it was he obeyed Darklander werecat law and with dignity and respect honored his combatant, watching as the Goddess Sakhmet reverently gathered up the dead human-like body, cradling it tight to her mist-outlined form. A blink later she departed with her charge.

The jaguar had been so young he'd died his first death. All felines had nine lives but usually by the sixth time when the pull of death called, the Goddess wasn't nearly so tender with your body. Hank knew that from firsthand experience. Praying he wasn't going to need her services for the seventh time, he felt his body mass transform back into werecat form. Honing in on the scent of Nora, his mate, he placed one tired paw in front of the other, knowing he had to cover over twenty miles in his sorrowful condition. The pull to go to her had become too strong for his cats to ignore. He could have gone to Mitch and have his friend doctor him up but instinctively he knew only Nora's healing touch would save him and their relationship. He hoped he lived long enough to complete the journey.

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Nora hugged her naked frame tightly. Covering her breasts with her bare arms, she let the night's breeze provide a blanket of goose bumps on her flesh. Tears marred her cheeks for some unknown reason. First she'd been angry, then confused, and now she felt an ache in her chest that had her worried sick about Hank.

Damn you, Hank. She snarled the words loud and clear in her mind and then tilted her head back and yowled angrily at the tall evergreen trees. Then his scent. That wild

forest scent caught her senses. Something was off though. Blood, the hot pulse of it, beckoned her to move to find him...to find Hank.

Without thought she changed, letting her wild Royal Bengal tiger take over her subconscious. She shook her head and then with a twitch of her whiskers zoned in on Hank. Ten miles deep into the forest she found him, bleeding, his shoulder gouged almost off, a steady stream of blood falling from his matted werecat fur to the forest ground.

Nora transformed, knowing that was the only way to heal him. She had to lay her hands on him. Heal him from her heart. Placing her hands on the heaving beast, she never once took her eyes off his. Even in cat form, Hank kept his green eyes. This time though, when she looked at him, she sensed the dullness of his life's energy fading from him. Something, or someone, beckoned him to leave her and she was going to have the fight of her life to keep him with her.

Closing her eyes, she placed both tingling palms over the large shoulder gash and waited, letting the heat of her healing powers travel through her body to his wound. Time had no meaning. The night's cool breeze over her naked skin wasn't a comfort as waves of hot energy pulsed from her and into him. She shuddered, the force of the healing such a momentous thing that at first when she felt Hank transform from beast to man she feared she'd failed. Prying open her tired eyes, she feasted them on his glowing physique.

"Thank you."

She nodded, too exhausted to speak. His warm arms pulled her to him. She rubbed her head under his chin, inhaling his scent, letting his hands palm her flesh.

Nora vaguely felt his energy channeling hers, refueling her with warm sexual stimuli, awakening all her senses. His hands moved underneath her buttocks, his fingers kneading her fleshy mounds and then he trailed a finger-line of desire back along her spine. It was a feather-tease and stroke of want, leaving her body burning.

His head moved to nuzzle her neck and then his hand sneaked up to angle her head to his liking. His lips were soft and caressed her body with warmth. He was tender, waiting for her acceptance. She yielded—opened her mouth to his assault. It wasn't a brutal claiming. Hank fought to leash his werecat nature, and because she now understood his beastly struggle, she would let him take her. Here naked, with only the conifer forest as their witness, tonight Nora would let him master her.

Giving a light lick to his lips, she swiveled her bottom in a sexy, provocative pose and then flashed to her feet. She stood before him finally proud of her figure. The strange birthmarks that pulsed bright pink underneath her breasts didn't make her second guess what she wanted. Nora parted her legs, catching the feral heat in Hank's green, feline-knowing eyes.

"You're killing me," he snarled, the sound its own loving stroke against the feline within her that dared to be so bold.

"In a good way?" she teased, letting her hands trail over her heaving breasts, taking the time to tweak her nipples.

His gasp, more a growl than anything else, signaled what she did was working. She felt the need to please him. The desire to take away his measured control preened her cat.

She watched him get to his feet, his long, thick, uncircumcised cock causing a steady throb of want to pulse through her pussy.

"I want to come inside you."

His demanding, erotic words almost caused her to go to her knees, bend her ass in the air and tell him to take her then and there. She watched his knowing smile. Blasted beasts that they were, she knew he had said that so he could read her thoughts. His hand fisted around the base of his cock. She purred. Nora watched him show off his proud shaft, pumping it with swift strokes. He made a move toward her. She growled a low warning, liking when his cats obeyed.

"Don't move. You only get to watch."

"You are a tease, kitten." He smiled and did as instructed for once.

Standing still, Nora focused in on herself, letting her hands block out that she planned to give herself an orgasm solely for the pleasure of her mate. She had picked out Hank's fantasy from his head and yearned to fulfill it. Pleasuring herself would help her master her inhibitions while enabling her to take some control away from Hank because as a werecat he liked to be dominant in and out of the bed.

Moving her hands to her breasts, Nora played with the buds until they were both achy from her twisting them back and forth. She licked both fingers, wetting them to reapply them to her nipples, and gasped as the night wind picked up to heighten her public sexual display.

"Open your legs more."

She obeyed his command. Moving a hand to her pussy, she rubbed herself. Then Hank's face was looking up at her.

"I need to taste you, Nora. Hold open your pussy lips for me so I can lick you, please."

It was the please, that purr of his satisfaction that did her in. Spreading her legs open more, still balancing upright, she used one hand to open her swollen nether lips. His rough tongue felt like heaven. She purred with bliss. His tongue and fingers set her body on fire.

"I want you to come for me, Nora. Let me lick you clean."

His sensuous words and searing hot look flicked the wild cat woman on. Finding the perfect balance on one foot, Nora hooked her other leg over Hank's naked back, spreading her cunt open to his probing fingers and tongue. She clutched his silky mane of hair for support and leverage. Within seconds an orgasm tore through her from his skillful ministrations.

"That's one," he growled with utter confidence into her core as he gently licked her clean, keeping his hand on her leg so she couldn't put it down.

"One?"

"You're going to come for me twice more before I put my cock where you want it."

She looked down at him and fought the teasing smile. "I am, am I?"

His sinfully long eyelashes greeted her with a knowing look. She fell on her back, lying down in the moss of the forest floor a second before he was once again licking her cunt in earnest.

"I like that you're wet for me...that's a real turn-on."

Nora knew if she got more turned on she'd have another orgasm within thirty seconds. While thinking that, he gave her pussy a probing, rough lick. She bucked her hips in welcome. *The man really does have a wickedly good tongue.* He stuffed her with two fingers, pumping them into her, reminding her of what they planned to do very soon. *And great manipulation of his fingers.* She gasped.

"What are you doing?" she squeaked.

"Why, Nora dear, I do believe I just found your H-spot." It was a smug declaration.

"H-spot?"

"Yeah, that's what I've named it. Your Hank spot." He laughed at his own joke.

She couldn't laugh if her life depended on it. He was doing something with his finger, tapping on a squishy spot inside her that caused her body to tighten like a bow.

"Come for me, kitten." Hank kept up his steady drum beat, teasing the inside of her, igniting a flare of primeval desire.

Nora felt her face flush. She felt the pulsing surge within her and attempted to stop his movements.

"Let it happen."

"No."

"Please. Trust me, you'll enjoy it."

Utter confidence filled his voice. A part of her knew exactly what he planned but she wasn't so sure. His hand twisted inside her, his finger picking up the beat on that

ultra-sensitive pad. Thoughts scattered. Sighing, Nora closed her eyes and let what was going to happen run its course. Her body struggled, tightening to reach that elusive peak, and then it happened. Her body burst apart, liquid warmth oozing through her veins while a gush of cream jutted from her core.

Hank immediately lowered his head, licking her clean again. The tender act, intimate and so full of caring, proceeded to turn her on all over again.

"That was —"

"Twice."

For a moment Nora digested his word and then it dawned on her he planned to kill her with orgasms. A truly feline smile of satisfaction crested her face.

"I want you inside of me," she whimpered in earnest, attempting to draw his head up and away from her sensitive cunt.

Hank ignored her. He blew across her swollen pussy lips, the slight breeze sending her senses reeling again.

"I can't, Hank."

"You will, Nora. Again and again and then I'll stuff my cock in that wet sheath of yours and take you as many ways as I like. Don't ever say no to me." His growl of warning told her in no uncertain terms he struggled to keep the beast at bay.

"Spread your legs open wider for me. I want them up in the air...like this."

Hank spread her wide open, leveraging her legs up so she had to pretend they were being held in place.

"So nice," he purred, then once again ground his face into her very wet pussy.

The orgasm that rippled through Nora was like a flash flood, unleashing something hidden even deeper within her. Hank lowered her legs. Her feet nestled into the mossy forest floor, the scents of the woods rich and pungent as night bathed them with its own power.

"I want you to turn."

“Turn?”

His hand caressed the insides of her damp thighs. His eyes bore hotly into hers with anxious anticipation. “Turn into a werecat. Now.”

She shivered. He was asking too much. Too soon.

“No.” The word was a defiant meow.

His hand stilled the movement of her leg, anchoring her to him like a leash. She yanked harder on her leg, needing the space to think, reason and become normal once again.

He bounded to his full height, taking her along for the ride. Arms of steel encased her body, cementing their union. His torso, all muscles, rippled and the feeling of being skin to skin felt perfect. Hot, slick, sex-scented glistening skin. Nora inhaled sharply. The physical ache, the urge to rub her body in one languid movement along his body brought her up sharply.

His nostrils flared, catching her desire—the scent of her own wet cum sliding with glee out of her pussy while his cock poked into her belly. It was a reminder she’d had three orgasms while he was still hard, stimulated, the need for release beating its own rhythm in his body, which drove her crazy. She’d recently climaxed but her body tingled with warmth that seeped into the marrow of her bones, making her dizzy with want. The urge to crawl up and impale herself on his cock shook her.

“I asked you to turn. Don’t refuse me.” His voice stroked the beast within her to a frenzied pitch of desire. Her cunt, wet from his previous ministrations, spasmed with desperate need.

“Not everything goes your way, Hank.” Speaking his name was an attempt to take control, assert she was not his to be bossed around. Nora was her own person even if she continually had to fight with her subconscious that screamed for him to take her fast and wild. She would not budge.

“Yes it does. You are mine.”

"Says who?" Nora tilted her head up, meeting his feral green eyes that were barely leashed with control.

"Me. The Fates. Sakhmet the Darklander Goddess who rules our lives. It's our way. The way. You. Are. Mine. So get used to it."

Nora fumed. She attempted to wriggle out of his tight hold. He didn't move a muscle. "I don't understand half of what you said but get this, Mister. I. Am. No one's. I am my own person first and foremost. What happened to charming Dr. Hank, anyway?"

He lowered his head, his breath rushing out. "Dr. Hank is my persona, it's who I am in the day but always I am this. Always I am werecat. A Darklander beast. Bound by the ancient Darklander laws of my world, which force me to follow the Goddess' decrees. So don't think you can charm me because I'm just as mystified as you are with what has happened."

"Happened? What has happened?" Her voice rose an octave. He moved his head lower, his arms relaxing as he approached her mouth with clear intent.

"Fate says you are my other half. If I don't fuck you your cat will go crazy. It's called heat and the Darklander werecat within you will go mad from want."

Nora digested his blunt, curt words and then laughed.

"What's so funny?" he asked, clearly surprised by her outburst.

"That's just ridiculous. You're basically saying I'm in heat and it's your duty to fuck me or else I'll go insane. Really, how much more insane can I get? And you know what I think, Dr. Hank?"

"What?"

The space between them grew. He released his hold and the cool night breeze brought her up sharply, cutting into her senses with the absurd situation she found herself in all because of him—her blind date.

"I think you picked the wrong day job. You should have been a veterinarian because then, just then, you might be able to find a cure for me supposedly going into heat."

"Oh there's a cure, kitten."

"Let me guess. It involves you and me fucking all day. Right?" She tossed her head up at him, pushed out her chest and clenched her fists together. She could be just as crude as him when push came to shove.

"Actually, we're going to fuck all night. But tonight you're going to learn a hard lesson."

"Really, and that would be?" Her anger was mounting, unleashing that wild beast within her, threatening all her sanity.

"What it feels like to be denied." He took a step back and placed a hand on his still rock-hard erection. Her eyes savored the slow movement of his hand as he stroked his cock from base to head. She instinctively licked her lips. A hot flush spread quickly across her skin.

"Denied?" The word was a small squeak.

"Yeah, kitten. By the time morning comes you will understand everything and this...this lesson won't need to be repeated." She watched him turn, his tight ass muscles teasing her as he sashayed away from her.

"Where are you going?" *The nerve of the man.* He planned to leave her here in the woods after all she'd done for him. *Next time I won't heal you.*

He cocked his head over his shoulders and looked at her hard with knowing. *Damn, he read my mind again.*

"Catch me if you can."

The rumble of his voice was a cocooning blanket of warmth, igniting goose bumps, causing the hairs on her skin to rise in welcome. He turned into his true werecat form and with one leap was engulfed in the thicket of the dark forest.

Nora stood there for a minute realizing he meant what he'd said. Erotic images of what he wanted to do with her were being telepathically channeled to her, leaving her panting with need.

That's not playing fair. She hissed, mad at herself and hating her body's reaction, she shook from the rush of desire for him.

By morning you will turn into your true Sakhu-were form and be mine. Never say no to me again.

His smug declaration was the douse of cool water she needed. Reason and common sense asserted themselves, reassuring her that what he'd said was mere macho bluster. Huffing at herself, Nora turned in the opposite direction, attempting to zone in on a familiar scent so she could return home.

Once home she planned to take a long, hot, vanilla-scented bath and scrub off Hank's scent. Then she'd be rid of him for good.

What utter nonsense. Me in heat. How ridiculous is that? Her foot snagged on a tree branch but instead of falling on her face her hands instinctively braced her body. Normally she'd have fallen face first into the dirt. The feline pose she found herself in slightly amused her while also alarming her.

The wind buffeted the trees around her. Her nostrils flared and she gasped. Her heart thundered wildly in her chest. Hank's werecat scent sailed into every gasping cell in her body. Groaning, Nora stumbled to her feet. Dizzy with want, she forced her limbs to move as far as possible away from Hank's scent. It was the hardest thing she'd ever done.

No way was she going to let his cat dominate her. *Cat? Did I just say that? Cats make me think of cute, cuddly kittens. There is nothing kitten-like about Hank. One stroke and he is liable to bite you or worse, seduce you to death.* Striding with more purpose, she put one foot in front of the other. His growl caused all the sleeping birds to flee for their lives.

Ignoring the power of his ferocious cry, Nora ran like a mad woman through the forest, more afraid of what he was capable of unleashing within her than the man himself.

Chapter Six

Nora's body was on fire. Achy. Desperate for relief. Her cunt was swollen, and she felt as if she left a trail of lust-coated pussy juice everywhere she went. Primitive instinct, that wild part of her she'd been fighting all night, was winning. Slowly but painfully she was going insane with lust. At this point she'd fuck anything. The raw knowledge of how base she'd become wasn't sitting well with her.

I'm a good person. I'm a healer. I am not some sex fiend. Repeating the words didn't bring relief.

An hour ago she'd had to strip bare. Walking for over thirty minutes through the dark woods with Hank's erotic thoughts, scent and possessive growl trailing her had been unbelievably hard. Once home she'd immediately plunged into a hot, vanilla-scented bubble bath only to have her body spasm with shaky need as an intense climax tore through her from the mind-shattering erotic vision Hank had sent her way. The vision had a lot to do with hot water. The feel of him, all hard and slick from the water, forcing her to her knees while he pounded his cock inside her cunt had been a vision her body purred for. The resonating growl that had erupted from her throat while her body had climaxed had caused her to leap from the bath, startled, shaky and mad as a hell-cat at him.

Donning her bathrobe for comfort hadn't been a wise move either. The silky feel of the material scraping over her ultrasensitive skin made her breasts swell with need. Giving in to the primeval urge to be in the buff, she walked around her house as if she were a caged lion.

Her fingers absentmindedly slid over her skin, a sensual caress fueling the need to masturbate.

"Don't even think it!" Hank growled the words after breaking down her back door.

"You could have knocked."

"Would you have let me in?"

Nora shook her head. "No way."

"That's what I thought, kitten."

He marched to her, his body gloriously naked with a shiny sheen of sweat coating his skin, making him appear even more ferocious. That fresh, crisp, soap-like scent and smell of the forest wafted around him.

Nora found herself sauntering over to meet him. The urge to rub her body up and all over his pounded through her. The need to mark him as hers ran circles through her rational mind. She shook her head in an attempt for clarity.

He grasped her forearms and before she could wonder about his actions her arms were tied behind her head.

Nora laughed.

"Something you find amusing?"

His green eyes were all possessive heat. Her laughter died in her throat. "Just wondering where you found the rope. You know me, the ever-practical nurse."

Giving a final yank to her bonds, he lowered his head so that his mouth rested a fraction of an inch from hers. She wet her lips, instinctively welcoming his. He didn't budge. "It always amazes me what one can find in the woods." His words were hard, sarcastic and edgy. Gone was the playful Hank she liked. The one currently ushering her to the sofa had built a barrier around himself and that excited Nora ever so slightly, further adding fuel to the needy cat within her.

She let him push her to a sitting position. "Why are you doing this?"

"You need to learn this lesson once. I asked you to turn into your true werecat form and you refused me. I don't like to be refused. I'm your mate. You will obey me."

This time Nora looked at Hank for a full minute before she burst out laughing in earnest. "Remind me again what planet you grew up on? Last I looked he-man went out of style when we moved out of caves."

"I grew up in the Darklander realm and trust me, he-man never goes out of style."

"Like that's supposed to make any sense to me. Darklander realm, is that some corner of the woods you crept in from?"

Okay, maybe I pushed him too far but it's not my fault. My body's on fire for him, and he's trying to have a rational conversation. What does he expect?

"Oh kitten, I came from the woods in the Darklander world but trust me, my world is nothing like this. And just so we're clear on things, you are mine."

His pointed stare ignited raw goose bumps of desire as he pried open her legs. Alarm skirted to life. His strong legs kept her from closing hers. She felt exposed and vulnerable to his heated gaze.

The feel of his warm fingers sliding up from her knee to her swollen cunt gave her pause. *Maybe relief is in sight.*

"When I'm done with you, you will beg for my cock and then change for me."

It wasn't a question. It was a bold statement of intent. She shook her head, feeling her hair come alive to the captivating, sensual tease of his fingers sliding in a thoroughly slow fashion to her pussy. Hank leaned forward. His hot breath blew on each of her puckered nipples, causing them to jut forward, seeking his mouth. He grinned. She mewled, hating her body's reaction, and closed her eyes in frustration.

"Open your eyes, Nora."

They flew open. He now stood holding his cock in one hand. It was a breath away from her budded nipple. She arched into him. He took her offering, rubbing his shaft around her tight nipple, letting his cum, his scent, mark her. The knowledge that it was his right rubbed her slightly wrong. *I shouldn't be allowing this or enjoying it.*

Still, when he moved to repeat his actions with her other nipple she couldn't stop her body from swaying even more into his rock-hard cock. Hank moved from breast to breast, teasing one peaked nipple and the other, making her chest slick and sticky with his essence. It was such an erotic play to her senses her legs opened wider, her hips tilted up off her sofa, her cum leaked out of her. She was in a desperate state. The need for his cock to be wedged tight within her pussy became a furious inferno she felt within her clenching womb all the way to her achy nipples.

"Do you want something, Nora?" His voice was hypnotizingly sensual. A complete caress of need, lust and sex wrapped around her.

"I want you." *Is that throaty purr coming from me?*

Her body tingled with desperation to break free from her bonds. There was a part of Nora urging her to give in to his demands, change, let that wild feline beast living within her free. That terrified her. It shocked her more than changing into what she had already become – a Royal Bengal tiger. To change into what he became – something he called a *Sakhu-were* – her sanity might not last.

He slapped his cock to her nipples. She bit her lips with the purr of how good it felt.

"I want my cock inside of you, Nora, but are you ready to change?"

She forcibly shook her head. "No. I can't. You're asking too much."

"You can. And you will. You're a strong woman, Nora, don't be afraid. I'm here to help you."

Hank took her legs in his hands, yanking them over his shoulders. To say she felt vulnerable before was nothing compared to this. Finding herself in this new pose left her pussy entirely exposed to his feral cat-eyes. His nostrils flared as he inhaled her sex-scent. He grinned, knowing she was desperate for relief.

"How is this helping?" she asked.

He grinned and then did the most wickedly erotic thing to her. He blew on her cunt. His hot breath washed over her slick opening, causing her to buck her hips up in

welcome. Then he backed off, letting the air from the living room force her passion to temper. Over and over again he repeated the sweet, teasingly erotic torture—hot breath tickling her cunt to the point of it almost spasming with an orgasm, only to have him back off, her body shaking with a fever that left her panting.

A surging, mounting anger over his deliberate actions reared its ugly head. However the minute her anger took hold of her passion, his finger slipped through her soaking wet cunt with a slow pass. Just one pass. Hank never dipped his finger inside her sheath; instead, he trailed it over her swollen lips. Nora couldn't take it anymore. Tears swamped her eyes. The ache within her blossomed like a hot desert wind, whipping her into a blazing frenzy of primitive need.

"Turn."

His one demand caused her to snap. She growled, hurling herself at him in one fluid leap, morphing into what he wanted, breaking free of her bonds. For that alone she was going to kill him.

Hank was alive only because he'd caught the sharp tang of her change. The fact her arms had been bound was also a blessing, he thought. He too had turned, allowing his werecat to finally breathe in her sex-scent. His fur rippled with pleasure. There before him growled his mate. Her chest heaved from the fast morphing of her cells but she wasn't backing down. Hank felt proud of her.

Nora panted deeply, and Hank could only guess at how the shock of the change into her *Sakhu-were* form felt. He visualized the cogs of her mind trying to rationalize how she changed from human to a Royal Bengal tiger and now to this—a majestic *Sakhu-were*. *My werecat. My mate. Mine.*

He silently pawed forward, carrying more of his weight on his hind legs to ensure she knew he could leap if she went for the kill. He knew she could take him down, but Hank prayed the healer also inherent in her genetic makeup ruled her common sense.

Hank watched Nora's fur ripple. Not nearly as large as him, her prehistoric features showed a mountain lion look, with the sleek sable markings, on her face. Her back shimmered with tiger stripes.

Cautiously nudging her still-heaving sides, he let his familiar scent seep into her. Turning his large head slightly, he let his werecat mane caress her face and blinked wide at her. Her whiskers twitched. It was the only sign of warning Hank caught before she ran away, once again. The minute he felt her muscles bunch he drew back, allowing her to flee out the door he'd broken down. Hank gave her a good minute of freedom before taking off after her. He growled, knowing full well she could hear him and feel his possessiveness.

Once again, with the call of the forest surging through his senses, Hank pursued who was rightfully his—Nora. Part of him wished she'd stop fighting the inevitable, but the man he could be realized all the changes she'd undergone within the last two days were far too fast for her human mind to accept. Challenging her preconceived notions of what she thought she'd been all her life was shaking her to the core. Of that Hank had no doubt.

Recalling the first time he'd changed into a *Sakhu-were* made him realize he'd been lucky. When the change had come his mother had been the one to answer all his questions. Werecat families were matriarchal and ruled by a female who chose a mate, after the males competed for her affection. Sometimes even the winning male did not affirm the affection of the matriarchal female. However, once a *Sakhu-were* scented his other half and claimed her in all ways as his, they were mated for life. But these days it was rare to discover a *Sakhu-were*, like him.

Hank padded softly over the dewy wet moss on the forest ground, until he came closer to Nora. Observing Nora in werecat form was truly a humbling experience for him. She dipped her two front paws gently into a small pond she'd been lured to. The scent of fresh water was a powerful smell for a werecat. He stopped himself from laughing. As a *Sakhu-were* her dual feline natures were testing her. The mountain lion

half of her wasn't keen on stepping into the fresh pond, while the tiger part of her urged her to leap without thinking. The sway of her tiger-striped tail was hypnotizing.

His mother had been mated with a dozen felines over the centuries but she had never been claimed by another like her—a full *Sakhu-were*. Hank was her firstborn and she'd been proud that he was like her, a werecat, marked as two felines but existing as one. His mother could transform into two felines, much like Nora, but his mother's second cat was a graceful mountain lion. Hank could only turn into a werecat.

A slight night breeze gave him away. Nora turned, her large eyelashes cast down in such a serious flirtatious way that Hank purred as he advanced. The minute her tail playfully swatted him he used his brute strength to push her into the pond.

A growl of outrage swiftly followed. A dripping wet werecat who was obviously pissed off at him wasn't a good thing. Moving his body into the pond, he padded over to her, ensuring he ended up just as wet. Then in one heartbeat Hank willed the turn, forcing his werecat to change into a man. A second later Nora, in her naked human form, stood shaking before him.

"I can't believe you did that to me." Her hair, dripping wet, clung to her face, even after the turn.

Needing to touch her, Hank hauled her to him, warming up the water with their passion. This time she didn't resist. Using his hand, he tilted her head up to his and then kissed her with all the passion that said she belonged to him, for now, forever and always. A moment's hesitation met his advance but then Nora twined her arms around his neck. Scooping her up into his arms, Hank made his way to the shore, never once breaking contact with her moist, kissable lips.

With his feet firmly back on the ground he lowered her to the mossy forest blanket. She spread her legs for him, nudging him with her feet exactly where he wanted to go. Finally breaking the kiss, they both took a deep breath. Hank used that time to study Nora's face. Her green cat eyes took his breath away. She was purity, and a true sex kitten.

"Hank, please, please take me." The throaty purr coming from Nora sent shivers of delight all through him.

Moving to nuzzle her exposed neck, he nipped his way to her sensitive earlobes. Kissing first one ear and then the other, he whispered, "Nora, I'm not going to fuck you. Tonight I'm going to make love to you. You are mine." Hank couldn't resist growling the word mine one last time.

"Just do it. I'm yours."

She breathed her answer into his ear and then nibbled on his earlobe, and all reasoning fled. Grasping his cock with one hand, Hank stroked it over her wet pussy. Then without any more fanfare he plunged his shaft deep into her welcoming cunt. *Home*. That one word aptly described how Hank felt as he pumped all his love into his mate.

Nora's legs snaked up to hug his ass. He loved how she gave herself up to the passionate part of her nature. Her heels dug deeply into each buttock as he pistol-thrust into her. Her inner muscles clamped around his cock with each penetration. Her nails left long scratch furrows down his back and he couldn't have been happier. Moving a hand to cup her ass, he leveraged her hips up more, forcing her to take his shaft deep into her tight sheath. She whimpered as the coming orgasm gripped her. Mightily pleased he'd lasted as long as he had, Hank finally sought his own release, ensuring every speck of his cum stayed deep inside her while her cunt muscles milked his still-hard shaft. He felt her purr of satisfaction and instinctively answered with his own.

Her hands caressed his back, keeping him skintight to her slick form. She nuzzled his neck, licking the salty sweat as her legs moved up and down his calf muscles. The sultry movements woke his werecat side up, urging him to claim her again. Not wanting to argue with himself, he decided that with daylight still hours away, the cats they were might as well play.

Hank slid his still-hard cock out of Nora's cunt. She mewled, wanting him to stay where he was. Giving her pouty lips a ferocious kiss, he slowly made his way down her

body, taking the time to kiss all those special spots he thoroughly enjoyed licking. Those spots included the sensitive tips of her nipples, the undersides of her breasts, the sides of her taut belly and especially her tiny bellybutton. Moving even farther, Hank made his way down her calf until he found her foot and tiny toes. Hank alternated between licking her toes and then sucking on them, until Nora became a mindless sex-starved woman all over again.

“Please, please, Hank.”

Liking his effect on her, he made his way up to her core. Using his hands, he spread her thighs farther apart. With a rough tongue he tasted their combined passion and growled in delight. She purred in ecstasy. Zoning in on her pebbled nub, he gave it a small, soft lick, causing her to leverage herself up off the mossy blanket as another orgasm tore through her. The minute the sensations quieted Hank turned Nora around so that she was on her knees, her ass slightly raised to his desire.

She turned her head, a question firing in her eyes. He grinned, cat-like, a second before he plunged his cock into her welcoming pussy. She growled her desire, meeting him thrust for thrust, on her knees, letting him pound his cock into her until his balls slapped up against her sensitive core. Placing a demanding arm around Nora’s middle, Hank leveraged her body up more, the need to fully imprint her as his taking over all sanity. He felt her cunt muscles relaxing, allowing him to flex and thrust as deeply as he wanted. Knowing he pushed her boundaries, he kept at it until her body trembled once again on that precipice, ready to freefall into a shattering orgasm.

The moment had come. He wanted to mate as *Sakhu-weres*. Telepathically pushing his thoughts into her, he felt a moment of hesitation meet his mind.

“Don’t fight me on this. You must. We must. It’s our way. When I say, ‘turn’, you need to obey.”

He kissed her neck, taking the time for her to fully digest his words. Searching her mind, he found his answer.

Turn.

The passion that stole through both of them blazed hot. The turn was like nothing Hank had ever encountered before. As mated beings, they morphed from humans to their true werecat forms, fusing their bodies and minds. Her thoughts to his. His thoughts to hers. It became a soul-shattering experience.

With his cock still deeply seated inside Nora's pussy, Hank let his baser instincts take over. Pinning her down, he bit her neck, a love bite that said to all she belonged to him. Hank thrust deeply into Nora's welcoming cunt, fusing them together until an orgasm swept through them both. A raspy voice broke through their thoughts, causing both Hank and Nora to turn back into humans.

"You are now werecats mated for life. His to yours...yours to his. You have my blessing to begin your own pride. Not that you took the time to ask my permission," said the one voice Hank had hoped never to hear again.

"Who are you?" asked Nora.

"I, my dear, am the Goddess Sakhmet. I seriously thought you'd never let that werecat side of you out. Good thing I sent Hank here to find you."

"What?" asked both Hank and Nora.

"You did not," said Hank, knowing it wasn't wise to argue with a Goddess, especially Sakhmet, but he couldn't help being mystified.

"Of course I did. If I left all this up to you and her..." The Goddess Sakhmet, dressed regally in a black formal gown that swept to her feet, was currently in her Egyptian phase. Two gold slanted eyes belonging to the Abyssinian royal cat stared hard at Hank and Nora.

"Well, you both needed a push in the right direction. Now you may approach and kiss my royal feet."

Hank knew this was part of the bonding ceremony after the Goddess blessed you but it didn't feel at all that way to him and he highly suspected Nora was about to laugh. Laughing at Sakhmet wouldn't do.

"You really don't need to do this."

"Of course I do, Hank. She is your other half. You are hers. I have melded you together as one. I have already petitioned the Darklander Council to grant you a special human marriage license."

Nora turned, giving him a nervous look. "What is she talking about?"

"Pay attention. I have gifted you with being a *Sakhu-were*. The cats were born within you when you were born. I marked you with the gift. It's a special blessing for a human. You are the first human I have bestowed this gift to even though you are not of our realm. But the time had come to test the possibilities and your human parents always loved cats so I deemed it a fitting blessing."

Nora immediately placed her hands over the two paw prints under her breasts.

"It's not every day I create a true Darklander *Sakhu-were* on Earth, so consider yourself blessed."

"Blessed," hissed Nora.

"Do not take that tone of voice with me, child. I am not to be trifled with. While I understand your transformation has been rapid, the time was drawing near. I pushed Hank into your path. The rest, as you would say, was chemistry," said the Goddess.

"Chemistry?" squeaked Nora.

"Hank, I sense she is not accepting of my gift. That does not please me. The choice is hers. She either claims my blessing truly or I will deem her fit to stay in one feline form forever. You have one night to show me my gift is worthy. When I return, my judgement will be final."

That dramatic statement was followed with a hot gust of wind as the Goddess Sakhmet blasted herself away.

"Did I just piss off a real Goddess?"

Running a hand through his still-tousled hair, Hank mumbled, "You have no idea what you've done."

"For once you're correct. I have no idea what she was talking about."

Hank turned, gripped her forearms in his and locked eyes with her. "Nora, the Goddess Sakhmet gave you a true ultimatum. You either accept what you are and honor her customs or she will turn you into a feline...a cat for good."

"You can't be serious."

"Like any cat, the Goddess Sakhmet does not take kindly to having her tail yanked. Sadly, this is one cat I can't save you from."

Fear flickered to life in Nora's eyes. He watched her swallow. "Tell me what to do."

Hank felt his own fear claw at him. The emotion left him feeling raw and vulnerable. Pulling her tighter to him, he wrapped his arms around her to give her comfort, realizing that was all he could offer.

He'd fight a dozen werecats and die a dozen deaths if he could make Nora realize the only way to change Sakhmet's mind was to embrace the *Sakhu-were* side of herself – the side she was terrified of. The side binding her and him to whatever punishment the Darklander Goddess meted out. Mated for life, Hank knew he'd share Nora's punishment and the idea of becoming an average feline, a mere housecat, caused him to growl.

"I take it you've got no words of wisdom," said Nora.

"Nora, when it comes to Sakhmet, actions speak louder than words. She's going to be watching you and you've got less than one day to convince her you embrace her blessing wholeheartedly."

"But I didn't ask for this blessing."

"Unless you want to be turned into a stray right this moment, I'd keep those thoughts to yourself. Let's head back to your house."

She nodded. With a sense of doom hanging over both their heads they made their way back to Nora's house.

"Can't I just apologize to her?"

"I think you're going to need to beg for her understanding and Sakhmet isn't the most liberal-minded Goddess." Hank moved them to her living room, where all of what had happened tonight had started.

"Remind me to fix your door," he said, trying to lighten the mood.

A feeble smile met his attempts. "Why bother. In another day I could be a stray like you said."

"We're not giving up. We're going to fight this, together," said Hank.

Nora nodded, pushing her long hair off her face. "Okay, here's what I need to know. Everything. You and I are going to go to bed and spend the rest of the night talking. You, mister, are going to tell me everything there is to know about being a werecat because I know nothing, and what exactly is this Darklander world you mentioned? In the past two days everything I thought I knew has been thrown out the window. And to top off my train-wreck of a life, I've just managed to piss off a real Goddess. Maybe if I learn more about this *blessing* I will be able to embrace it."

Hank followed Nora to her bedroom. This was the woman he'd seen in the alley – fearless, courageous and willing to take on a *Sakhu-were* like himself to save an innocent. In this case that innocent person was her. Hank grinned, feeling a burst of confidence that they could tackle what the Goddess had thrown their way.

"Isn't the Goddess Sakhmet the God of the Dead?"

That one question coming out of Nora's mouth deflated his high. In less than twenty-four hours he had to teach her everything there was to know about Darklander werecat history, folklore, culture and customs. Hank wished he'd studied ancient history instead of going into medicine. It would have made things a lot easier.

"I think we're going to need lots of coffee to make it through the night. You go get comfortable and I'll make us some. Do you have cream?"

She grinned.

He wished she hadn't. That one flash of her white teeth made him think of sex and they didn't have time for that. Or did they? Hank eyed her large bed, deciding caffeine was overrated.

Chapter Seven

"I can't believe you dragged me here. I don't want to be here and you two resorted to blackmail to get me to come with you." Nora knew she sounded whiny but she felt totally drained after all that had happened to her over the past three days.

"Look, we don't want to be here either but those men need to be put in their places." Cindy was her usual all-business self and Tina looked very much like a lawyer, all self-control and polish. Nora felt anything but polished and under control.

"I really don't think it's a good idea for me to be here. I'm not myself these days."

"Trust me, Nora, none of us are ourselves. By the way, I like what you did to your hair." Tina's clipped voice broke through Nora's thoughts.

"Thanks, but I didn't do anything to my hair, and what's wrong with your voice?" asked Nora, gulping. She had slept the entire day away, something unheard of for her. In her mad dash to get ready, Nora was lucky she had two matching high heels on. She hadn't bothered to check her hair. Her gut instinct told her that if she looked in a mirror she'd scream. The werecat she'd become last night had most definitely changed her. It would appear that change was both inside and out.

"Then how did you get red, gold and brown streaks in your hair?" asked Cindy.

"It's all natural, you like?" Nora gave a slightly terrified giggle, realizing instantly it sounded more like a purr than a laugh. She hoped her friends didn't notice. She let Tina lead the way. They claimed a table that was dead center.

"By the way, your voice sounds as if you're purring," Tina said.

"What?" asked Nora, quickly adding, "that's insane...*pleeease*, people don't purr."

"You do," stated Cindy.

Luckily the three were forced to stop their bickering when the manager of the theater, Madam Sasha, appeared at their side. She clutched a bright pink witch's hat in one hand and promptly placed it on Cindy's head. Cindy immediately swiped it off, placing it under her chair.

"Ladies, I don't think you read the sign when you walked in. Tonight it's all about the magic. It's all about discovering your true potential and letting the wild side out. That's why I called tonight 'Your Magical Wild Fantasy Night'."

"Oh that's original."

Cindy wasn't normally rude to anyone. Nora watched her friend erratically pop a handful of colorful jellybeans into her mouth. *Something's up with her. At least she doesn't have to impress a Goddess. What the heck am I thinking? At least she's a human and not some freaking werecat beast. Whatever's bothering her can't be half as serious as what I'm facing. And just where is the alcohol? I seriously need something to drink.*

Sasha moved the candy bowl closer to Cindy.

Something is going on between those two. Nora watched the play-by-play between Cindy and Sasha and she vowed to get some answers later that night.

"I like the wild hair," said Sasha to Nora.

Nora smiled. "Just trying it on for a while."

Sasha leaned down closer toward Nora. "Well, on you it looks perfect. Reflects more of the wild woman you really are."

"Gee, thanks...I think," muttered Nora.

"Look, aren't you supposed to be announcing the show? It's about to start." Cindy's interruption was timed perfectly.

Gracefully, Sasha smiled. "Suits me. Let's get this show started." She turned and glided away. "See you later, gals."

Nora almost choked on the drink she'd grabbed from a nearby volunteer server.

"What did she mean by that?" asked Tina.

Cindy mumbled, "Nothing."

The stage lighting dimmed and then Sasha had the spotlight on her. "Ladies, tonight you're in for a special treat. Tonight each of my selected men will showcase their assets for you alone. Tonight each will strut their stuff and trust me, you won't be disappointed."

Tina fidgeted in her seat. "Alone."

"Assets," repeated Cindy, her mouth so full of jellybeans she couldn't cram another one in even if she wanted to.

"Special treat, my ass," snarled Nora.

The minute darkness settled on the crowd they all grew silent.

"Do you smell that?" Nora's nostrils flared, catching the distinctive odor of a female feline in heat. This time it wasn't her. She couldn't help the low growl that resonated from her.

"Shh," said Tina.

The minute Hank stepped onto the stage, a dark hungering to rub her body up against his settled inside Nora. She breathed deep...wrong move. His foresty, Irish Spring soap scent caused her nipples to pucker into two tight buds and her panties immediately dampened as desire for Hank came hot and fast.

This was why she'd tried to get her friends to go to tonight's last charity auction without her. Nora hoped to ignore her body's betrayal that begged her to climb onto the stage and tear off Hank's clothing and do the dirty—not caring that a crowd watched. She panted, feeling her panties dampen even more with cream.

"You all right, Nora?" asked Tina.

"Hey, what the hell's wrong with your eyes?" asked Cindy.

Nora was pleased Cindy's question diverted Tina because for the life of her she couldn't form a coherent thought. And that was wrong. The rational part of her that still

remained told her she should run like the scaredy-cat she was, straight for the woods. *Maybe then the Goddess Sakhmet won't find me. As if.*

Nora got jarred out of her thinking when she heard the crowd's encouragement.

"Oh my god, he's stripping." Tina laughed.

"This is so good," drawled Cindy.

"This is not good at all," declared Nora, attempting to clamp her legs shut. Her pussy throbbed with desire and her skin had that hot, tingling sensation she got whenever she was about to change into her baser feline form. Then the ripe sex-scent of another feline snarled through her senses.

Attempting to zone in on the cat, Nora barely took her eyes off Hank, who strutted to a wild, techno-jungle beat, causing her heart to accelerate. Every single blasted button on his white shirt was now open, showcasing his lean, muscled abdomen, which had every woman in the hall oohing and ahing for him. His hands played with the waist of his pants, tugging them nice and low over his sleek hipbones.

Nora ground her teeth together and prayed to all the deities, gods and goddesses she'd ever heard about that he had better not be wearing one of those pants that could be whipped off lightning fast.

The second she heard the swooshing sound of Velcro being undone she cursed all said deities, gods and goddesses for not listening to her. With her eyes almost popping out of her head, Nora glared daggers at Hank. Then it dawned on her. Tonight he wasn't wearing a mask. Tonight it truly was Hank showcasing all his assets. But not for her alone.

The goddamn werecat was broadcasting loud and clear that he had a body most women would love to run their sleek palms over. Hank's slow striptease wasn't pleasing to Nora. Her palms were sweaty, her pussy pulsed and her nose kept twitching as she zeroed in on the other feline who purred her own pleasure at Hank.

Finally finding her competition, Nora growled, not caring if anyone heard her. She forced herself to stop ogling Hank, who wore a tiger-striped thong. Then with a slow,

torturous turn, all the women in the crowd saw his ass. *That ass is mine. He's sooo going to regret this.*

"Where are you going?" asked Tina.

"To kick some feline's butt," said Nora. She pushed her chair out to make her way toward the other woman, striding like an exotic panther to the stage.

Purposefully bumping into the woman with the long, sleek black hair, Nora flashed her teeth at her. "He's mine."

"Says who?" asked the woman.

Nora made sure the feline heard her low, vibrating growl that was laced with the threat of death. *Wow, when I get bitchy I go cat-bitchy all the way.*

A resonating rumble from the stage forced Nora's attention back to Hank. *Bad move again. That werecat has no shame.* Nora gulped hard and ran her sweaty palms over her jeans. Still moving his body in tune to the wild beat, Hank was currently on his hands and knees, grinning, growling and flexing his hips up and down as he made his way to where Nora and her competition stood at the far left side of the stage.

"I'm going to fuck him. You can't stop me."

This feline's confidence is going to be the death of her. What am I thinking? I'm a healer. I'm not some crazed cat that wants to fight for her mate.

"He's totally packed."

The woman's words rocked whatever sense Nora was holding on to off the ledge. "Packed," she muttered.

"You know, hung, loaded, cock-full."

The graphic terminology truly pissed her off.

"Oh yeah, he's hung all right. And, kitten, that cock is all mine."

The woman—panther to the core, thought Nora, unsure how she knew that—turned and hissed at her. *Finally I caught your attention.*

"By Sakhmet, who you calling kitten? Cub."

The woman might as well be naked. She wore a slinky top, which dipped low enough to reveal her navel while showcasing her two large breasts.

Hank grinned like a well-satisfied cat as he came nearer to them. "Ladies, no fighting."

Nora's competition flashed a pure fuck-me smile at Hank, ensuring his eyes caught the bouncy movement of her breasts. Nora quite literally saw red. The second before she felt that burning tingling feeling invade her body, Hank pulled her toward the lowering stage curtain.

Chapter Eight

Blood dripped down Nora's exposed arms. The panther-woman hadn't bothered with niceties after all. She'd gone all wild feline and Nora had welcomed it.

The turn into the Royal Bengal tiger that lived inside of Nora was fast and ferocious. She shook off the pain from the panther-woman who had attacked her, noticing she had two huge claw-like gouge marks running down her arms. Somewhere in the back of her mind she knew Hank watched. They had left the theater and found themselves shrouded in the darkness of the alley. Hank would not interfere. If he dared, Nora knew she'd kill him. This was her fight. Something the cats who lived inside her said was hers by birthright.

That's how insanely base she'd become. The wild feline, the werecat she had become, took over. Nora roared, the sound loud with its own broadcast that she wasn't to be messed with. With her enhanced eyesight she watched the panther crouch, knowing the cat aimed for her throat. At the last second Nora turned her bulk to the right. The panther missed her by a millisecond, but it provided enough leverage for Nora to give a deadly slash to her competition. The panther hissed in pain. Nora didn't hesitate. With her other paw she slashed again. The last thing she expected was to be tackled from the back and thrown to the hard asphalt. The impact jarred her ribs. Scenting more than seeing the second panther, Nora forced herself to rebound quickly to her feet and shake off the stumble. Pain lanced her left side. A mental check revealed she had cracked a rib. With her breathing labored she stood strong and imposing, with all her teeth gleaming white against the black of the night.

So you don't play fair. Nora forced the telepathic link into the panther-woman.

We are pride. We fight together and we fuck together.

Nora growled. She didn't like that answer and was pleased Hank was left out of the conversation because the woman Nora knew *that* was every male's fantasy.

He will not interfere. The law says it so.

The law says one on one, thought Nora.

We are pride.

Nora knew she was going to be left on her own. It was up to her to either embrace her true form, the werecat side, or die. *Nice reality check.* She braced for two frontal attacks.

Her eyes slanted to the right, following the slithering feline movements of the other panther-woman while maintaining eye contact with her true opponent.

They jumped in unison. Nora's feet immediately braced for the impact. She tried turning to her left to avoid the head-on collision of the two large panthers coming straight for her face. The stark reality of what the panther-women were trying to inflict on Nora caused her to roar again. They weren't going to be happy simply killing her. No, they wanted to leave her face a horrific slash of claw marks.

A dark smoldering rage within Nora caused her breath to hitch. Panic that she was losing control of her reality, of the strange situation she currently found herself in, raised all the hairs on her body. In a blur of speed she closed her eyes and gave in to that deep, wild part of her she knew she had no control over. The cry of outrage that surged through the darkened alley caused both panthers to halt in their attack.

The transformation from the Royal Bengal Tiger into a *Sakhu-were*, double the average size of the two panthers, caused Nora to smile inwardly. She was sure, however, the prehistoric werecat grin spreading across her feline face looked scary as hell. With her two long canine teeth dangling down past her mouth she knew she was a sight to be reckoned with.

Advancing in a slow gait, pure silent stealth, caused both panthers to make a hasty retreat.

Cowards. So much for fighting together! Nora pushed the thoughts like a deadly scratch straight into the panther-women and rejoiced when both screamed in agony.

Nice touch, kitten.

Kitten? Who the hell is he calling kitten? Nora swooped high and then low, gunning for Hank. If he knew what was good for him he'd turn and run. Instead, maintaining human form, he stilled his movement, bending his tall frame into a crouching position. A second before her killer instinct kicked into high gear she slowed her crash-course into Hank's outstretched arms. He tugged on her head, weaving his hands into the thicket of her sable coat. Gentle lover's hands caressed her still-quivering skin until a purr was evoked all on its own.

Turn.

She obeyed his will, breathing deep, pleased the transformation to human had healed her battered and cracked ribs. Then Hank stood, taking a step back.

Follow me. He turned, shredding his clothing in a quick flash of cells, morphing and turning into what he really was. What she really was. What they both were together. Darklander werecats to the core. He bounded away into the night. This time there was no thought when Nora gave in to her true baser form. This time the turn was effortless, the power quickening her blood like a euphoric drug, enhancing all her senses. She knew instinctively where he was leading her. The forest—their own private bedroom.

The scrunch of the wet mulched ground was welcomed by the pads on the bottom of her paws. Her cells scented the pine, birch and hemlock trees once they had made their way to the heart of the forest that bordered the city. The sky was star-filled but cloudy. Her eyesight savored the night. In one blink, the heat of the forest animals and pulse of life were revealed as an inner eyelid clicked into place, showcasing a beautiful, vivid world, marked with hues of red, orange, green and yellow. The black of the night was simply a backdrop to the lush life that existed in the dark of the forest.

"Took you long enough." Naked, in human form, with his cock protruding proud and thick before him, stood Hank.

Nora turned, loving the cool caressing breeze sliding across her ultrasensitive naked skin. She didn't bother with the pretense of covering up her breasts. Instead, silent as the cats who lived within her, she made a sultry move forward. Hank's eyes followed the bounce of her breasts. That one calculated glance on his part was enough to make Nora's pussy scream with desperate need. After all that had happened tonight she needed his cock crammed deep within her. He advanced, meeting her halfway. No words were spoken. None were needed. With their feline senses they took stock of each other, each aware of the other's heightened arousal.

He pulled her tight to him, his fingers digging deep into the cups of her ass, ensuring she felt the throb of his erection up close and personal. She purred into him. Hank lowered his head a fraction of an inch. It was enough for Nora to latch onto his lips. With a growl of delight she plunged her tongue deep into his mouth, mimicking what she wanted him to do with his cock to her cunt. Teeth clashed, each trying to dominate. His desperate need to get inside her added the spark to her fire. Hank pushed Nora back onto the forest blanket, and she eagerly accepted his weight on top of her.

Then in a flash of movement she reversed their roles. Tonight she was the winner. Tonight she planned to claim her prize—Hank, her werecat, her mate. His green eyes flashed at her, welcoming her advances. Using her hands to hold Hank's arms down, Nora found what she wanted—his nipples. His back arched when she teased them both to dagger points. He growled and purred, bucking his hips up to meet the dew between her legs. Shamelessly, she rubbed her pussy back and forth over his cock, slicking him with her cream, marking him with her scent.

"Fuck me," growled Hank.

Part of Nora knew he was superior to her in strength and if he really wanted to take control of their positions he could. Because Hank allowed her to have her way with him, she did as instructed.

Leveraging her dripping wet cunt above his thick, rock-hard cock, she lovingly impaled herself. Being stuffed with Hank's shaft was her ultimate reward. She moved up and down, riding him and grinding against him like a hellcat. Nora plunged up and down with all she had each time, sliding dangerously close to the edge of bliss. Hank's hands clawed at her ass then moved to her hips, allowing him to set the pace. She welcomed it. Throwing back her head, she mewed as his skillful fingers found her nub. Hank flicked her pebbled pearl back and forth, and the flash of the orgasm that tore through Nora's body had her grinding hard onto his cock and fingers. Vaguely Nora felt Hank's body meet her through the cloudy, languid feeling as she came back from bliss to earth.

Hank rubbed her back, allowing her to purr into the aftershocks of their sizzling sex. He flipped her over and her back welcomed the cool of the forest blanket. She moved her legs to curl around his waist.

"Now I plan to make love to you."

Really, he didn't need to say that but Hank continually surprised her. He'd long ago shed the masks he wore and now he lay bare to her, his feelings written clearly through the longing in his emerald green eyes.

Could I love him? Do I love him? Those two thoughts clashed into Nora. The reality was she did. When that had happened she had no idea. Vaguely she thought she'd loved him from that first night and that scared her. *Love at first sight*. The idea was slightly fanciful, full of some young girl's dream for a knight in shining armor. She giggled. Hank was anything but a knight, more like the steed, the beast that would come in to slash the foe.

"Do you accept what you are?"

The sensual cadence of the voice caused a chill of goose bumps to form over Nora's skin. Sakhmet. The Goddess Sakhmet stood in front of them in her elegant, casual pose about to set her judgement.

Fear leashed tight, catching Nora's heart, making it impossible to speak.

"Cat got your tongue?"

Humor? Tell me she did not crack a joke.

"You honor us with your presence, Goddess, but the day is not over."

"I would choose my words carefully, Hank. Your lives are getting short."

Hank wisely bowed his head, letting the air of silence reign.

With shaky legs, Nora stood up, making sure to give a quick bow to the Goddess. "I accept what I truly am." The minute she said the words she knew them to be true. A breath of air escaped her and she smiled.

Sakhmet bowed her head. "It pleases me well to see you embrace the blessing gift I have bestowed on you. Honor this gift, human, with reverence and you will honor yourself, Hank and your blessed offspring."

"Offspring?" squeaked Nora, silently saying a prayer she was not pregnant. *And just what would I deliver? A baby or kittens?*

Sakhmet smiled, the yellow of her eyes casting an eerie glow to the cloudy night. "Your thoughts are amusing. Werecats deliver babies but if you'd like I could bequeath you with kittens."

Nora shook her head. "No thanks. When I'm ready to have a baby I'd like it to have fingers and toes instead of paws and claws."

"Then it shall be so. Honor your mate well, Hank, and I will be gentle when next you pass into the Darklander Fade."

Nora hadn't heard Hank come to stand beside her, not that his stealth approach shocked her anymore. He linked his fingers through hers but bobbed his head again in Sakhmet's direction. "Thank you."

The Goddess bowed her head slightly and then in a fast cat-blink disappeared. The wind, which had stilled to the Goddess' commands, breathed its way through the forest, caressing Nora's skin. She shivered.

Taking her arm in his, Hank said, "I know just the thing to warm you up."

Together they silently made their way through the forest back to Nora's home. "We can keep walking in human form and this will take an hour or turn into our feline forms and be there in ten minutes."

Nora liked that Hank asked her permission, giving her the choice to turn into the werecat she was.

"That would be great. The quicker we get home the warmer I'll be."

"Trust me, once we're in your house you'll be toasty warm after I'm through with you."

"Is that a promise?"

"No, it's absolute certainty." He squeezed her hand, a surge of warmth teased its way through her cells. "And the minute we're home I plan to make love to you in every way."

"Every way?" Her breath came out as a sigh.

Hank leaned into her. "Kitten, every way."

"Promises, promises," she purred, ensuring he felt the seductive rub of her skin as she turned into her true werecat form.

A heartbeat later Hank followed suit, brushing against her. They raced through the forest's canopy of trees, each eager for the cradle of a bed so they could create their own hellcat style of loving.

About the Author

Vivacious by nature, I'm either baking or thinking up my next love scenes – talking about mixing ingredients. Trust me, the recipes are always delicious, especially if chocolate's involved. I juggle writing in between my demanding four children and have discovered some of my best plot themes while driving the mini-van to and from places. I love a good night out on the town where I can discard the mom profile and dance to my heart's content.

Writing has always been my passion. I strongly believe in soul mates and feel eternally lucky that I snatched up mine. The wilder side of me comes out in my erotic writings, where I fuse lustful fantasy with the paranormal edge. I thoroughly enjoy making up worlds, hunky men who cause me to go weak in the knees and intelligent women who can also let their hair down.

Renee welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and e-mail address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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